

# Oh no! After I Reincarnated, My Moms Became Son-cons!

vol.9 – Epic of the Hero King: Melody of the  
Land of Snow

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## Ch. 00 (Prologue)

Regardless of how snowy or bloody it is on human soil, the elven lands are always peaceful with birds singing, fragrant flowers and a nice-gentle breeze.

I felt a little perplexed.

*'How long has it been since I've been to the elven lands, haven't seen that ancient tree, haven't heard the soothing sound of the wind and haven't flower scents that cross over countless mountains all the way here?'*

I haven't been back to the elven lands in a long time. To me, the elven lands are similar to a place cut off from the world, where I can take shelter from the turbulence. No matter how chaotic the outside world may be, it's always blissful and warm here.

*'I should go back and see the elven lands. I should go back to take a look around after so much that has happened. I should take Luna back to look around. I should take her back to her hometown to look around. Luna's home is here. If she didn't meet with misfortune, Luna wouldn't have appeared on human soil. She would be shining and radiating the same way the beautiful flowers in bloom here in this small village radiate.'*

*'Luna is truly very beautiful. If she was here, she would definitely be very, very beautiful when combined with an innocent smile and a past void of pain. She would definitely be the most beautiful flower. However, would I have been able to meet her then? While I would be in the same lands as her, I'd be at the Imperial Capital as the Elf King living in peace, while she'd be at a tiny village as a ritual sacrifice. I'd accompany Lucia on strolls in the Imperial Capital and spend boring afternoons with her, while Luna would be singing in the sea of flowers and then lie down in the flowers when she got tired to catch her breath.'*

*'We would never have met then, would we? If we didn't meet for the first time at the market, we probably never would've met each other. Galle Village is too small. It's so small that it's never appeared on the map. I have no reason to come here, and Luna never would've come to the Imperial Capital, either. We would've travelled different paths that never would've crossed. Though we*

*would've been in the same world, what happened after we met never would've taken place, because my Princess is Lucia, and she wouldn't need me.'*

*'Without that tragedy, without her suffering and without the first most terrible meeting at the market, our after story wouldn't have existed. That would mean that we wouldn't have embraced, and we wouldn't have stargazed together. The touching moments and our love would never have existed.'*

I gently held Luna. Luna slept soundly in my arms. I sat in the wind. I looked at the hillside filled with flowers. With Luna in my arms, I murmured, "But even so, Luna, I still want you to stay here."

*'It would've been great if I had Luna stay here when we came here that time. It would've been fine if I had left Luna on the elven side. If I didn't get soft-hearted and bring Luna along, Luna wouldn't be in an eternal slumber right now. I might've been in danger, and I might not have survived that night, but regardless, I don't want to lose my Luna over that.'*

"I hope my company can bring you bliss and happiness, my dear Luna."

I kissed Luna's lips that were no longer soft and slowly stood up; however, I then staggered down the hillside a little. Luna's hair blew in the wind. Her smile was gentle as a butterfly's wings. I carried Luna slowly through the sea of flowers comparably to watching butterflies dance in the flowers.

There was nobody around. I wanted to send Luna off by myself.

*'Luna must've felt lonely when she faced Alice. She must've felt very lonely and terrified.'*

*'Would Luna hesitate about which way to go when she's faced with endless darkness? Will she cry?'*

*'I don't know if I can transfer my warmth to her. I don't know if my embrace will provide her with some comfort. Luna walked to her end alone for my sake. I won't let her finish the journey alone.'*

*'I want to, at the very least, hold her in my arms until the very last moment.'*

I've already dug a deep hole in the middle of the flowers, and I've already placed the casket down there with the flowers that exude warmth spread out

on top. The white flowers were akin to shining stars.

*'By placing Luna inside, Luna will be able to see the stars we gazed at together, won't she?'*

I placed Luna down gently on top of the flowers and stroked her cheek one last time... and held her hand one last time.

I looked at the corner of Luna's mouth and softly said, "From now on, I won't ever have a personal servant. Luna, you're my one and only personal servant. No matter where I go from now and no matter what I become, I will never have a second personal servant, so you don't have to get jealous, Luna. Don't worry, I won't betray you just how you didn't betray me."

*'I'll keep that promise.'*

*'For me, a personal servant isn't a post, but a person and someone I will miss.'*

*'Besides that, there are no personal servants.'*

"Goodbye, Luna. I believe that we will meet again. I'm sure we will. Before we meet again, I will definitely become a monarch that's strong enough to protect you over on your side. As long as I'm with you, I'll never let Alice approach you again. So have a good rest, Luna. Have... a good rest."

Luna slowly disappeared from sight before me as the black casket lid slowly shut and ended the memory of that night.

*'Luna is truly gone. She's truly gone. Nobody will wake me up gently in the morning again. When Nier and Lucia aren't around, nobody will wait for me in the middle of the night with a light.'*

*'Luna... is gone.'*

The long nails were nailed in. The flower petals were scattered on top of the casket. Layers of dirt were shovelled on top, but the levelled dirt could never fill the hole in my heart.

*'Luna was always by my side. Fate brought her to me. Time made her existence natural and right. Betrayal stole Luna away, causing my heart to forever be missing a piece, where painful blood will continue to trickle from.'*

*'If I'm going to bleed, there must be others who shed blood. And I'll make sure*

*they bleed more. I'll make sure they bleed their blood dry. I will make all those who bring harm to those around me vanish from this world. I'll drown all the other morons who even think about it with their blood.'*

*'I'm no longer afraid of killing people, and I no longer worry about killing people. I have no more mercy. I won't care about their age. Everybody's fate is fair before a blade. If I can't completely eliminate my enemies, then there will be trouble in the future. If I can't be ahead by one step, I'll be crying tears of pain before another casket again. I won't even be able to get revenge.'*

*'Mera made me want to become a King.'*

*'Luna let me know the meaning of authority and power.'*

*'So don't worry, Luna.'*

*'I won't allow that sort of thing to happen again. I don't want to use my abilities to conquer people anymore. I'm just going to use my sword. There won't be any more betrayals, because there will only be two sorts of people in this world. The first type is the one who obeys me. The second type is the dead.'*

*'I'll kill all those who don't obey or question me as I did the other day. I've killed so many people already so I don't mind killing more, tens more, hundreds more or thousands more.'*

*'I just need to have authority and power. I can't just stay as a lord. I want to become a King as Mom is. That's the only way I'll be able to kill all those I want to kill.'*

"This is where Troy Galadriel Rosvenor's personal servant, Luna is buried. I hope that she was full of smiles when she was with me."

I fumbled to stick the tombstone into the mound of dirt crookedly; then I picked up Luna's small statue and placed it into the flowers.

*'See? I knew it.'*

*'Luna's smile is more beautiful than the flowers.'*

## Ch. 01

“Miss Freya, this is the new schedule for the maids’ shifts this month.”

Freya took the schedule the head maid handed over then frowned, “What is this about with Onii-sama’s personal servants? Why have three personal servants been added?”

“Umm... Miss Luna has passed away, right...? I feel that His Majesty requires someone by his side to look after him. The Princesses are pregnant, so I am afraid that she may not be able to take care of His Majesty despite her good intent. His Majesty has lots of jobs. If he does not have a personal servant then... Lots of things cannot be done by maids. However, you do not need to worry as these three are very experienced personal servants. They can certainly quickly adapt to His Majesty’s...”

“Let them go. Onii-sama will not accept any other personal servant.”

Freya cut her off, and then irritably looked at the maid in an awkward position. She explained, “Onii-sama has deep feelings for Luna, so there is no way he will accept a personal servant. Therefore, make sure you never mention this personal servant business in front of him. Onii-sama has been irritable as of late. If he gets angry, nobody will be able to save you.”

“Yes... Understood...”

The head maid trembled as she nodded. Freya crossed out the three names with firm strokes, and then returned the list of names back to her. She then asked, “When you came in just now, was there someone outside waiting? A male guard, I think it was?”

“Yes. I think he is looking for you, so he is still waiting outside.”

“Let him come in. That is all. You can leave now.”

Freya waved her hand; the head maid responded with a bow. She then pulled the door open. Gerald gave her a nod to greet her when he passed her, but the head maid ignored him. Gerald entered the room. He looked at Freya, who sat behind the table in the spacious room. The table was seriously long. Freya looked out of place sitting at the table. She resembled a cloth doll that got placed in the chair.

When Freya saw Gerald, she played with her hair using a finger while looking

at him with a smile, “Ah, hello. I need to thank you for your help at the Royal Capital and apologise for my rudeness at the time.”

“Ah... I... I...”

Gerald was particularly astonished. He didn't care for the young girl before this meeting. He thought that she was a liar when she claimed to be the Prince's sister. They got into the palace that day by sneaking in, and they were only able to sneak in due to the uproar in the palace. Hence, he wasn't expecting a reward, and to the contrary, was actually afraid that someone would try to settle the score with him for trespassing. However, he then received a transfer order to come to Troy City to report in.

So naturally, he was somewhat astonished to see Freya sitting there with an arrogant posture when he arrived.

While looking at him, Freya clenched her teeth and regretted, “It looks as though you did not believe I am His Majesty's younger sister... Nevertheless, that is understandable. I did, indeed, make the royal family and myself look bad in my state back then. Damn it, if I could do it over again, I won't be so reckless, and Onii-sama wouldn't have become the way he is now.....”

It appeared that the young girl still couldn't get over what happened that day. She was totally clueless as to what happened that day. The only guess she had was that something happened to His Majesty that night. After that, she saw him bring people back and leave with an extra horse carriage. There was no “and then” afterwards.

“Forget it. I don't want to think about it again, not to mention how embarrassing it was. I called you here to fulfil my promise to you. You saved me, helped me and did not take advantage of me. If I do not repay the favour, I would be an ungrateful individual. This is your appointment. From now on, you are one of Onii-sama's personal bodyguards. Give it your best.”

Freya looked at Gerald and said everything she had to say without giving him a chance to counter.

“No, no, no... please allow me to think about it for a bit... I have not quite come to grips with it...”

“To put it simply, you have gone from a lowly guard getting by waiting for the day you die into a member of His Majesty’s guard unit. Do you still not get it? This is a generous reward!”

Freya looked at Gerald, who was slightly worried.

*‘How can he not understand something so simple? Could his brain be dysfunctional by any chance...?’*

“I... I thought the reward would be money or something... I have not prepared myself to leave the Royal Capital... I have not brought my belongings here... This appointment is a little bit too sudden, is it not...?”

Indeed, this announcement might be too sudden to Gerald. He only received news that he was to go to Troy City. He didn’t know that he was changing work locations... Gerald was also aware of his own skills. He could be a guard, but a bodyguard of military personnel level...

*‘A personal bodyguard... Don’t you have to be at the Valkyries level?’*

“You don’t have any family or things worth money, so isn’t it the same no matter where you go? Just focus on training diligently. Onii-sama’s personal bodyguards are all normal people so you don’t need to worry. The training, however, is very tough; therefore, you need to prepare yourself mentally. That’s about it. Go report in to Philes. He’s the captain of the unit.”

Freya rolled her eyes. She really wasn’t willing to continue talking. The treatment a personal bodyguard receives is worlds apart from what a normal guard receives. She never expected him to be so wishy washy. What was there to think about? His Majesty’s personal bodyguards aren’t randomly picked, but instead of going to report in, he was being wishy washy.

“But... I...”

“You’re so annoying! This is your appointment. If you want to take the job, go and see Philes. If you don’t want the job, take it and go see Philes to exchange it for money! Do as you please. I have other business to attend to. Get out!”

Freya didn’t want to say any more. Gerald took the letter of appointment with a dumbfounded look and rushed out. He looked at the appointment in his hand. He then looked at the empty corridor and spaced out. The news was too



sudden for the young guard. He had no idea what he should do...

I walked to my palace.

My guard unit had just finished training, but when they saw me return, they immediately reformed their ranks and orderly stood before me. I sped past them, but then felt something odd, and therefore stopped in my tracks. I looked at the guard closest to me. I frowned, "Who are you? I don't remember you being part of the unit."

"Reporting, Your Majesty! I am Gerald Sloke. I have just joined the unit as per Miss Freya's arrangement."

I looked at his red and nervous face. I then remembered that he seemed to be the one who helped Freya at the Royal Capital.

"Oh, right, I remember now. All right. Train for a few days, and then you'll be responsible for Freya's safety. You protected her once, so I'll put you in charge of her safety in the future, too." I pat him on his shoulder then narrowed my eyes and added, "I rarely trust someone this way. If Freya didn't mention to me how you helped her, I would never let you approach my sister. But despite that, make sure you remember this. Stay loyal. If your loyalty shakes, I'll show you my wrath. That'll be all. You can all leave now."

Gerald watched the Prince leave with a blank look while the unit slowly broke off. Philes, who was standing next to him, patted him on his shoulder, "It's all right. His Majesty has been relatively irritable recently. Just be mindful and you'll be fine."

"I feel that... His Majesty is not as amiable as the stories say... Rather... there's no mistake he is Her Majesty's son... His gaze is the exact same... Also... sorry... but your chest is touching me..."

"... Are you against men being a little touchy?"

"What?! You're a guy?!"

"Of course I'm a guy!!! Touch if you don't believe! Go ahead and feel it!"

"Ah... Oh, shit, you do have an Adam's apple..."

## Ch. 02

“Your Highness, this is your clothes...”

“Oh... right... how do I button this up? Lucia, hurry and help me adjust my cape. My boots, too!”

“Your Highness, I still need to prepare your breakfast... Your clothes haven’t been sent over yet... Aaahh... how in the world do I do this up...?”

Lucia was flustered as she tried to help me with my cape and tying up my boots. I must say, Lucia who’s always been the one looked after, has no idea how to take care of someone else. She volunteered to take care of me, yet she couldn’t wake up when she slept holding me. After I woke her up, she spent a long time searching for her soul. She took ages just to find my clothes for today.

“All right, all right. Your Highness, let’s go... Ah!!”

After struggling to finish helping me with my cape and boots, Lucia let out sigh of relief. She pulled the door open to leave, but then crashed into Nier who was holding a tray, causing the breakfast Nier brought to go flying, thereby covering us in fruit juice. Worst of all, jam got in Nier’s hair and ran down to her cheeks.

“Why didn’t you knock?!”

“Do you not have eyes?!!”

The two of them exchanged angry glares while I let out a heavy sigh. I tossed my cape that took so much effort to do up aside, and then said, “It’s all right. Just make it again. Nier, Lucia, go and clean yourselves up, wash up and whatnot. Call two maids over to clean up here and bring a new set of clothes while they’re at it.”

The two of them exchanged guilty glances. Nier then bit down on her lip and softly apologised, “Sorry... Dear... I... I really don’t know very well what I am supposed to do daily... I did say I wanted to take care of you, but I have no clue what I should do...”

Lucia lowered her head with embarrassment. She looked at her toes and said, “Me, too... why are there so many requirements for doing up a cape...?”

“It’s all right. I’m not blaming you.”

I shook my head then sat down to one side. I looked at the messy room. I sniffled and then softly added, “Luna had to do so much work every day... It would be so nice... if Luna was still here.....”

The two of them looked at me with a hint of concern. Nier’s lips twitched. She then took in a deep breath before anxiously saying, “It’s all right. It’s all right. Dear, I will do my best to get used to my duties as soon as possible. I lived with Luna before. I know that I will get used to it soon.”

“She’s right. I will do my best, too. I’ll figure it out soon. Your Highness, you can let me try it. I’ll definitely succeed!”

I looked at my two excited wives and smiled. The two of them were both worried that I would be down over Luna. I knew what they meant.

*‘I can’t continue drowning in the pain of losing Luna for their sake, if nothing else. I have already taken Luna home. I just miss her tremendously, that’s all. ‘*

“I think it’s a bit of an issue to have two pregnant women look after me.”

I looked at their bellies then grabbed hold of their hands. They’ve both been pregnant for two months now, so their bellies have started to show signs of their pregnancy. While holding their hands, I softly told them, “You two must protect yourselves properly. I’ve only got you two left. I can’t lose you. I’ll do anything for you, but you must promise me to look after yourselves properly, as well.”

The two of them nodded and gave me a kiss on my cheeks. The two of them stood up and went to wash breakfast off themselves. I also needed to wash up. I stood up and looked at everything on the ground. I sighed heavily again.

*‘How nice would it be if Luna was still around?’*

The three of us had breakfast after we washed up. However, because we had breakfast relatively late, Freya had been waiting for a long time already by the time I arrived at the office. As soon as I entered, Freya looked at me grumpily with a frown. I looked at her and smiled, “What’s wrong, Freya? Who angered you?”

“Onii-sama, I know that you are in a bad mood, because of Miss Luna’s passing. If you do not wish to hear it, I shall not complain.”

“It’s fine. Say what you should. I want to know how I angered you, as well.”

“Of course, it is because of that Gerald! Why did he come to me and tell me that he is my personal bodyguard from now?! Onii-sama, how come I was completely oblivious of this?”

Freya frowned. With a somewhat disgusted expression she went on, “I am used to being alone. You suddenly assigned a personal bodyguard to me without asking for my opinion first. I am very unhappy, because of that.”

“Don’t you like Gerald? If you don’t like him, I can swap him for someone else. Do you like Shusia? You’re both girls after all.”

“That is not what this is about, onii-sama. I do not hate Gerald. What I hate are personal bodyguards! They will only be dead weight to me. They cannot help me in any capacity!”

“You can’t say that, Freya!” I firmly interjected. I looked at her with a stern look, “Freya, did you forget what happened last time? If you have a bodyguard, that won’t happen. You’re my sister. I was careless before. As a result, I forgot to assign a bodyguard to you. I won’t make the same mistake again. I can’t protect you at all times. You need someone to protect you. I have nobody else beside me other than you girls, so naturally, I have to protect all of you. Frankly, an extra bodyguard won’t affect your life. He will usually live in your inner room. And since he didn’t do anything to you while you were unconscious, he shouldn’t do anything in future either. He can protect you, too. Of course, there’s one more thing, as well. If he shows signs of betrayal, let me know. I’ll ensure he doesn’t take the next step!”

“But...”

You heard me, Freya.”

I raised my voice; Freya, consequently, obediently stopped. She looked at me as though she was wronged. I looked at her with her head down and gently stroked her head. I softly explained, “I hope that you won’t become a second Luna or run into danger as you did last time. If something did happen to you last

time, as well, what would the point of me living be? So, it's not just for your sake, but for my sake, too. You have to put up with him."

Freya looked up at me. She bit down on her lips, and then under her breath replied, "All right. I shall accept this bodyguard. Onii-sama, your expression just now was a little scary..."

"Was it? Sorry for scaring you."

I stroked her small head then smiled and went on, "I've taken a look and see that there's nothing important to attend to. I'm going to go out for a bit. I want to accompany Lucia for a stroll. Nier has to go for a check-up today. Freya, keep Nier company."

"All right." Freya nodded. She then looked at me with a tinge of hesitation, and then said, "Onii-sama, do you, honestly, not intend to have another personal servant...? Your room's..."

"No need. I only have one personal servant, and I won't have another one." I resolutely refused Freya. I then added, "I can do what Luna did by myself, so I don't need a personal servant."

Freya looked at me with signs that she was in a dilemma then, "Is that so...? In that case, have it your way."

## Ch. 03

Lucia looked at me feeling slightly puzzled, "Your Highness, do you have time today?"

I nodded, "Lucia, come for a walk with me, just the two of us. Nier has to go for a check-up today. We haven't gone out together in a long time, have we?"

Lucia paused for a moment then revealed a happy smile. She wrapped her arm around mine and replied, "Okay, okay, let's go. Your Highness, let's go out for a walk! I haven't taken a good look around Troy City, yet. Let's go, let's go, Your Highness! Ah... Sorry... I might have to call you King soon..."

I pinched her face. Lucia giggled quietly then hugged my arm. We left

together.

Lucia and I have been apart for a long time.

*'How long has it been since we've gone out to play?'*

*'I remember going out every day on carefree strolls with Lucia when I just arrived here. I'd meet Mera, too. Thinking back on it, it feels as though those days of leisure never existed.'*

The streets of Troy City are very similar to the Imperial Capital. Perhaps Vyvyan used her Imperial Capital as a reference when she created them. This business street made us feel as though we had returned to the elven Imperial Capital, Durgana. Lucia scanned the surrounding stores with lots of curiosity; she breathed in the sweet air as the two of us slowly walked through the street. We didn't have any goal. We leave our next destination to where our feet bring us, just as we did in the past.

"Your Highness..."

Lucia hugged my arm and softly continued, "I miss Durgana a little now..."

I turned my head to see Lucia with her face down. I touched her long ears and softly responded, "Me, too. I want to go back and see it, too. I haven't been back in a long time. I miss the elven lands. Lucia, I have to make a trip back there very soon. Come with me when I return."

"Will we still come back out?"

"Your Highness... I... I really... don't want to continue this way...The incident last time, honestly, scared me. I never imagined that there would be someone who would attack you in the Royal Palace... Your Highness... let's go home, okay...? I really don't.... want for you to continue staying outside..."

I looked at Lucia's gaze without saying anything.

Lucia is the one who's most supportive of me. Lucia knows me more compared to Nier and supports me more. Lucia never even asks for my reasons regardless of what I do. Sometimes, she doesn't even need to ask me to know what I want to do. Lucia grew up with me, so we have chemistry. She unconditionally supports me and has never stopped me.

This time, however, she was genuinely scared.

*‘Perhaps seeing Luna’s corpse frightened her. Perhaps seeing the state I was in that night frightened her.’*

*‘Whatever the case, this was the first time Lucia begged me to not leave the elven lands.’*

Truthfully, I could do that. I could go along with Mommy Vyvyan’s plan and successfully become the Elven King. If I was willing to, I could handle the political affairs myself. If I wanted to slack off, I could dump it all on Mom. None of the elves intend to revolt. Due to my lineage and mana, they didn’t oppose me succeeding the throne. I could lead a peaceful life with Lucia in Durgana, sneaking out and strolling on the streets without a worry every day. Such a life wouldn’t carry any dangers with it. There’d be no ambitions, either. As long as I stayed with my wives and mom peacefully, my life would be safe and sound.

The elven side is forever my haven. No matter how bloody and turbulent the outside world is, it couldn’t pierce the barrier known as the forest. It couldn’t break through Vyvyan’s protection for me. Mommy Vyvyan has protected me for over ten years, leading to me being under the impression that the world outside was all flowers and roses until now.

When I return to the elven side, it’s harmonious as always.

*‘But why do I refuse to return? Why?’*

*‘My heart desires to continue travelling outside, continuing on forever despite the rivers of blood and myself being covered in wounds. I’ve already given up so much. If I leave now, Luna and Mera will be very disappointed, won’t they?’*

I clenched my teeth. I didn’t dare to look at Lucia. I, instead, looked ahead toward the end of the blue-stone street and softly replied, “Lucia, I might not return.”

Lucia didn’t say another word. She, instead, tightly hugged my arm. I didn’t dare to look at her, while she didn’t say another word. She just stuck to my arm. We stood in the middle of the street. We didn’t eat anything or buy anything this time. Instead, we were silent right from the start.

“It’s all right, Your Highness...”

A moment after, Lucia looked as though she wiped her eyes then looked up at me. I looked back at her and saw her tough-as-steel determination in her gaze. She smiled and continued, “It’s all right, Your Highness. I will always support you and always protect you... I just hope that you can rest for a bit during the few months that I can’t protect you. After that, I will stay by your side wherever you go. If you are in danger, I will protect you!”

I looked at Lucia’s small face. I looked at her eyes full of determination and love for me. I couldn’t resist hugging her tightly and giving her a firm kiss on her lips.

Lucia moaned softly then closed her eyes to respond to my kiss. She tightly hugged me back.

*‘I think that our child in her belly is getting crushed...’*

Lucia affectionately kissed me. She even exuded the unique scent she exudes on full-moon nights.

*‘Is it because she’s pregnant? Why does it feel that Lucia is getting a little Nier-fied...?’*

Lucia released me. She wiped my lips, and then earnestly said, “I will protect you... I promise!”

“I believe you. I believe you, Lucia; however, let me protect you in the future, as well... I don’t possess any combat specialities, but I’ll do my best to provide you and our child with a peaceful environment. I’ll make everyone bow down to me. I won’t let there be another betrayal, like that!”

Lucia looked at me. She clasped my face gently and softly responded, “I trust you. I trust... my husband... I’ll look after myself properly... In the future, I will definitely protect you... I won’t let you be in that sort of danger again, and I won’t... leave you.”

“Ah... I’m glad to hear that... I’m glad... Lucia... I love you very much... I really, really love you.”

Lucia hugged me tightly. She lightly rested her head on my chest, stroked my hand gently and tenderly said, “Me, too. Me, too, my husband... My only loved one...”



I stroked her cheek and with a smile, said, “Let’s go, Lucia. Let’s take a carefree stroll around as we did in the Imperial Capital.”

“Uhm! Let’s go, Your Highness.”

## Ch. 04

“Welcome back, Onii-sama.”

When Lucia and I returned to the palace, we were welcomed by Freya and an unhappy Nier. I waited for a moment, but that familiar “welcome back, Your Majesty”, never came.

*‘How many more times do I need to remind myself? Luna is no longer with me. Luna really is gone. Life has gradually settled down now just as when Luna was still around. How am I meant to tell if Luna is here or not, like this? If life just continues this way, how am I to tell myself that Luna is no longer here? How can I get myself to remember Luna’s cruel death?’*

Freya looked at me. She hesitated for a moment before asking, “Onii-sama, are you all right? Why does it feel as though you are always spacing out? If you have not been well, I suggest delaying the return to the elven lands for your succession by a few days. After all, your workload will only increase after your succession. Further, I do not understand the elven operations. As such, only Her Highness can help you when the time comes.”

“No, I’m all right. I’m just spacing out a bit. Also, I haven’t made up my mind about the succession.....Oh right, where’s Mommy Vyvyan? How come I haven’t seen her since this morning? Is she not at Troy City? Or has she gone back already?”

I shook my head as I suddenly remembered Vyvyan. Vyvyan was still here last night, but I haven’t heard from her since this morning.

*‘Could she have returned to Duargana?’*

Freya looked at me and replied, “Your Highness has gone back already... At least, I would assume so. At any rate, she is not at Troy City at present, so I

presume she has gone back.”

I nodded and replied, “Okay. I’ll wait at Troy City in the meantime then. And while I’m at it, I’ll have a good think to decide if I want to go back to become the elven king or not.”

“Your Majesty, if you are tired, you can go back.” Freya looked at me with a serious look and continued, “I will definitely follow you to the elven side. I do not have any family in humanity’s lands, myself. You are my only family; therefore, I will follow you no matter where you go.”

I scrubbed Freya’s head with a smile and explained, “Thank you, Freya. It’s just that if I go back now, it won’t be a vacation, but a permanent move. I’ll have to stay in the forests forever.”

Freya squinted similarly to a kitten then smiled, “It sounds as though a decent life.”

I turned to give Nier a gentle hug and next to her ear, asked, “How are you, Nier? Is everything all right?”

Nier glared at me while complaining unhappily next to my ear, “If I was in a better mood, I’d be even better. The current diagnosis is for me to manage my mood well. But then, my husband was outside enjoying the company of another woman while I was getting a check-up. Tell me, how am I supposed to be in a good mood?”

From my side, Lucia proudly said, “I’m His Highness’ wife, too. It’s normal for a wife to go out and have fun with her husband. The only reason he would not be keeping you company is that he no longer loves you.”

She sounded glorious as a victorious pigeon in a fight.

Nier clenched her teeth. She then hugged me tightly and fumed, “Your Majesty, come to your senses. Tonight, I’ll make sure that you don’t have the strength to leave the palace tomorrow morning.”

“Please give me a one day break...”

Nier was serious. I absolutely believe that. And based on the serious character of a Valkyrie, Nier was absolutely going to do that. I really might not be able to

leave the palace tomorrow...

*‘Did that doctor lie to me? What happened to “as long as Nier gets pregnant?” Why don’t I detect Nier reverting back at all? Or are you telling me that Nier has gotten used to it, and that this has become her instinct and isn’t an effect of drugs? But either way, neither is good news for me.’*

“Onii-sama, there is an occurrence that I am not sure if I should mention it to you or not. It is about the empire’s activities, I would say. And I am certain it is Her Majesty’s order. We are at Troy City, which is located at the border of the elven and human territories. At current, the number of human merchants coming to Troy City has decreased...”

Freya looked at me as though she was in a dilemma. She explained, “The amount of business we have had here recently is only four-fifths of what we usually get. Although it is common for there to be fluctuations in business, Troy City is currently gradually improving and the ruler is present. As such, the opposite should hold true. Why would it be decreasing? I think that there is only one reasonable explanation, and that it is military activity.”

“Military activity?”

“Yes. If the military is coming here, then that signals that the situation here will become unpredictable. An unpredictable and unstable situation will shake our economic foundation.”

Freya then shook her head, “Furthermore, according to my observations, the military in our vicinity has begun to mobilise. They are currently spreading out along the border. That is a clear indication that there is, without question, something wrong nearby. Of course, I believe that they are not aiming to attack Troy City. Her Majesty would not attack us. Consequently, the only possible direction they are headed is the elven lands. Considering the fact that you may succeed the Elven King’s throne, I think that Her Majesty might be trying to deter Her Highness from pushing that agenda... However, I am absolutely certain that Her Highness is not afraid. It is very probable that a second war the same as the one a decade ago may break out next.”

I shook my head fast and replied, “That’s impossible. That’s impossible. If my moms want to fight, how would they ignore my feelings? I’m no longer the

same me a decade ago. I couldn't possibly watch humanity and elves clash regardless of who's starting it. The two of them will think of its effect on me. They definitely won't fight."

"No. The agreement they reached as a result of the war a decade ago was for you to switch your place of stay between the two places on a monthly basis. If you do become the Elven King, it would be impossible for you to travel back and forth between the two sides, as you would, naturally, need to live in the Imperial Capital. Do you think that Her Majesty would agree to that? The war for you will definitely break out this time. Even if it does not, the human and elven armies will be on guard here at the border. A single spark will trigger a huge explosion. You are the safety pin between the two of them. I think that you must invite Her Majesty and Her Highness here to talk it over."

Freya went on sternly, "You got hurt here in humanity's lands and lost Luna. There is no way Her Highness is not angry. At the same time, Her Majesty will not allow you to leave. If this conflict of interest cannot be resolved, a war is inevitable. Thus, you must take up the responsibility. Only you can get the two of them to withdraw their armies. The future of the two empires lies with you now..."

"I understand now. I will get my moms to come here and talk it over with them. I'll make sure to do that. I would rather watch the two of them fight it out themselves than watch the two races engaged in a war. It appears that I am destined to never become the King of either side, or else there will be no way of resolving this conflict."

"That is correct. However, Your Majesty, this world is very large. The world is not restricted to just this region. I believe that as long as you want to, you will definitely be able to have your own empire. You definitely will!!"

## Ch. 05

Freya didn't say that just to frighten me. These two mothers started a long and brutal war back then for a child. Mothers are naturally crazy when it comes

to their children, so it's even crazier when it comes to my two moms, who also have the power of rulers.

In order to avoid the war, I sent both of my moms an invitation, inviting them to Troy City. I'm not doing this out of consideration for the two races, alone. The main reason I'm doing this is for the sake of Troy City. My only capital at current is Troy City. If business in Troy City dies, then the city will be history. As I have no way of planting food crops and feeding myself in the city, I must ensure that the harmony between both sides is maintained in order to ensure the safety and livelihood of my city.

Now I need to wait for my moms arrival. Mommy Vyvyan will be able to get here quickly. She could essentially come here immediately after seeing my letter. Mommy Elizabeth, on the other hand, will take a long time. I have no time for breathers at the moment. The lord of Socina City, Karana, sent an envoy over to confirm our trade agreement.

Karana definitely managed to get her hand on the metal. According to the initial agreement made in the desert, Karana should be providing us the metal at the lowest price while we provide them with our elven dye we manufacture. Of course, we're the ones who're going to be determining the price. As the elders in her city were defeated by her, the money of the bankrupt elders now belongs to her. Karana is now at the apex of power. Nobody else in Socina City can question her power any longer.

Our two cities are both getting what we need from each other, one, due to our agreement in the desert, and two, because we have a good impression of each other. Karana doesn't feel successful; she doesn't think that I handed her the map as a result of her successful planning. What she feels is gratitude toward me for me handing it to her. Honestly, she's not wrong there, for if I called for Vyvyan at the time, she would be empty-handed. However, Karana's humble attitude gave me a particularly good impression of her.

Karana, Nara and I are a very complete chain with common interests. The three of us get what we need from each other and have what we need to use each other. It's also precisely because the two of them trust me and look forward to my accomplishments that not only were they not affected by the vassal state clean up, but were even rewarded.

Loyalty will be repaid; though, I wasn't the one that repaid them.

I went with the envoy to the planting area we had finished partitioning. I haven't seen what the colony's sugar cane and tobacco plantations were like, but after seeing this neat and orderly planted dye crop, as well as the humans and elves working, I presume that the colony resembles this. However, it appears that the relationship between the elves and humans here isn't too shabby.

The envoy gave a satisfied nod, "You live up to your reputation, Your Majesty. Troy City is the only place where one could see a human area manufacturing elven goods. As long as we mutually trust each other and are honest with each other, I believe that there will be no issues. I am just a representative, but I dare say that if our Lord Karana was to see such an orderly planting area, she would definitely immediately extend the agreement for a fixed number of years."

"Don't you have the right to do that?"

"You give me more credit than I deserve, Your Majesty. I am but an envoy delivering a message to confirm the agreement with you. I checked your planting area, merely because it was conveniently on the way. If you want to discuss that sort of stuff with me, I think you will need to speak to another envoy."

The envoy smiled and continued, "I am actually here to invite you to Socina City, Your Majesty. This is a personal oral invitation from Lord Karana. We have begun preparations for your reception, as well. Lord Karana said that she had mentioned it to you previously. If you have no business coming up, I hope that you can come to visit us at Karana City as a guest. Lord Karana is looking forward to your visit."

Karana did, indeed, mention it previously. She did invite me when we met briefly at the guest hall. I also had plans to make a trip there after the hunting event. However, what transpired after that put a wrench in my plan, causing me to put an indefinite delay on the trip until now.

I'm fine with going there now. It's just that I need to talk to my two moms first. I can't leave Troy City until that's settled.

I looked the envoy and replied with a smile, "Thank Lord Karana for the invite,

but I do have some other business to attend to for now. Once I have finished up my business, I will definitely head to Socina.”

“I can report to Lord Karana, then. Your Majesty, please make sure to come to our prosperous and grandiose Socina City. We are looking forward to your visit; nevertheless, please inform us ahead of time to allow us to arrange a welcoming ceremony for you. You are our esteemed guest, after all.”

“Thank Lord Karana on my behalf for me.”

The envoy passed on the invitation from Socina City, so I’ll go for sure. I’m not going there just for Karana, either. Karana is just my excuse to go there. I’m slightly interested in this woman who possesses advanced thinking, but of course, what I’m most interested in is the North of the canyon, a continent that’s said to be a land of snow.

I want my own nation but I’m fated to not be able to head south as that’s humanity’s territories. The further south I go, the closer to the heart of Mommy Elizabeth’s rule I go, while to the north is the elven forest. If I choose to go there, I’ll be stuck as the Elven King for all my life, not to mention possibly triggering a large-scale war. For those reasons, my only choice is to choose a large unknown place, and that is the north of the large canyon.

The large canyon to the north is unknown territory to the elves due to the extreme cold. The elves have no way of living there. Human explorers, who want to get there, need to cross through the elven territories. At a time when the tension between the elves and humans is at its peak, no human would dare show up in the elven forests.

The only place that would have some connection to the north is the city east of the elven lands, and that is Socina City, which is located in the north. Socina City is built on snowy lands, making it extremely similar to the northern area. Plus, you can look down at the continent in the north from the top of the mountains there.

*‘I think that Socina’s people have some knowledge of the North.’*

For now, I only know that there are apparently living organisms in the northern continent, and they are the trolls that rob the elves. In other words, it’s inhabitable. Further, I read a few things about the north in the ancient

books that the elves have. What I found out was that a very long time ago, before the large canyon even came into existence, the North wasn't that cold.

A large canyon can't change the temperature of a region. I believe that something there changed. Changes that are a result of approaching the elves' territory are ninety percent likely to be related to mana. If the large canyon was the thing that prevented the elves' spring water to reach the surrounding vicinity, then I can construct a water channel to fix the waterway, allowing the springs to flow again. In any case, I must go and take a look.

This is the only place I've found where I can build my empire. So, come what may, I'll definitely go. I must see what the land north of the large canyon has to offer.

## Ch. 06

Nier locked my neck and panted as she said, "Dear, I want to go out together with you, too."

This is Nier's kinky state. I pulled my somewhat sore hand back and asked, "Tomorrow?"

"Yes. I looked at your schedule for tomorrow and it doesn't look as though you have any jobs, right...? Her Majesty and Her Highness will soon be here. I want to spend some time outside with you before then. You went with that elf, Lucia, but you didn't come with me. I'm very unhappy."

Nier jerked, and then timidly leaned onto my chest. She then looked at me with red flushes on her face.

Nier curled up on my chest and wore a disturbing smile as she licked her fingers bit by bit.

*'I don't know why Nier has this special preference. Is it due to a side effect of a drug...?'*

"All right. Let's go out tomorrow, then... But, if you want to go out, stop here for tonight. Otherwise, I won't want to go anywhere tomorrow."



I watched Nier's hands lustfully move around, and then watched her glue herself to me, so I gave her the warning. Nier reacted with a shocked expression. She then looked at me with an expression which evidently showed that she was in a dilemma as she looked back and forth between my face and her hand...

*'Hey, hey, hey, do you need to deliberate this for that long?! Do you want to go out with me, or do it with me?'*

"That's fine. Worst comes to worst, I'll carry you tomorrow! In short, I want to do both! So, Dear, please open your legs!"

After pondering it for a long time, Nier dove her head back into the blanket, giving me no time to be shocked or explain. I feel that I'm not her husband in front of her. Others beg their wives to do it, while I can't even get a break...

*'I surrender. It's better if I just obey.'*

Nier, actually, held back. I was in a relatively good state when I woke up the next day. At least, I wasn't as spent when I woke up the next day. After helping me get dressed, we went down stairs for breakfast. My two wives had eventually gotten used to looking after me after Luna's departure. Although I don't really want for them to look after me, nobody else can touch my room and breakfast.

I think that only my two moms can handle it in the future... I believe that Mommy Vyvyan won't mind while Mommy Elizabeth would be elated. However, I bet Mommy Elizabeth will order one of her people to clean my room, and then brag to me as if she actually helped me tidy my room...

Nier hugged my arm at breakfast and looked at me with a gentle expression. Her eyes of affection caused me to feel a little unsettled. Nier's eyes were lifeless three months ago, so it was a strong contrast when I see her gentle expression. Lucia, who sat on my left hand side, looked at Nier with disgust. She asked, "Why are you looking at His Highness with such a disgusting expression?"

"Hmph. I'm going out with His Majesty today."

Lucia nodded and looked at Nier nonchalantly. She calmly responded, "Heh,

you just wanted to go out with His Highness, because you saw me going out with him. I went out with His Highness to play every day in the afternoon when we were at Duargana. I'm used to it. I don't think you've ever gone out to play with His Highness though, huh?"

Nier snickered, "His Majesty went out with me while we were at the Royal Capital, too."

"You went with him as his bodyguard though, didn't you?"

Lucia shot her a glare. Nier froze stiff in place. She looked at me with a blank look, but I gave no response. I just wanted to be an innocent audience member. Lucia laughed, and then teased her, "I went with His Highness as his fiancée, so I was walking side by side with him. We ate together, shopped together and went for tea together. You, on the other hand, followed behind him, huh?"

"I... I... We shopped, too! His Majesty gave me gifts, too!"

*'Are you talking about the candy?'*

"Oh well, you're quite pitiful. You never got to experience dating, after all, huh? As the woman who has been in love with His Highness for over ten years, I won't get jealous of you... Uhm... I won't..."

*'I can taste your jealousy in my soup, girl...'*

However, Lucia did look at Nier with a proud expression, whereas Nier could only clench her teeth as she didn't have a counterargument. Before we got married, Nier always followed behind me when we went out. She wasn't even willing to take a bite of squid. But nonetheless, we didn't really go out to play after getting married, either.

That's why Nier is very angry right now...

"I don't care what it takes! I must do everything Lucia did yesterday!"

Nier locked my arms in hers. She grumpily looked at the street in front of us and exclaimed, "It's just eating, shopping and drinking! I want to do all that, too! Otherwise, Lucia will mock me with those things again!"

I chuckled then lowered my head to kiss Nier's forehead. I replied, "Lucia has been with me for over ten years. There's no need to mind that, is there? I can

still stay by your side for a long time, so I can do those things with you for a dozen years, too. There's, therefore, no need for you to mind those things. If you want to go out with me in the future, just let me know. I'll definitely go out with you."

Nier looked up at me with hot flushes on her cheeks. She leaned her head on my chest and softly said, "How nice would it have been if I had already fallen for you at that time... I really don't want to think back on that time... At the time, I, honestly, treated you... too hostilely."

I hugged her as I laughed, "But I already really liked you back then."

"... Aaahh... I really don't want to remember it..."

Nier flirtatiously snuggled up on my chest. She then looked at up me and asked, "Your Majesty, do you like me as I am now...? I must've changed a lot compared to my past-self, right...? Do you like me as I am now?"

"I like every version of you. I just hope that you can control yourself a little..."

Nier revealed a mischievous smile. She gently knocked on my chest, and then explained, "It's all your fault, isn't it? Weren't you the one who gave me such a naughty order back then? Rubbing and whatnot... And, since you saved me, don't stop half way. Your Majesty, I will not spare you!"

"No...?"

"Of course not!"

Nier spun around as she left my chest in a pleased and suave fashion. She then grabbed my arm and smiled, "Let's go, Dear. I couldn't love you for a dozen or so years as she did in the past, but I can continue loving you until forever. My prince, I will always love you."

"Uhm, I know. I'll love you, too. I couldn't walk with you in your past, but I'll walk the future with you. I spent over ten years with Lucia in the Imperial Capital. I'll love you for my whole life. Of course... Lucia has to be included..."

"Your Majesty, don't bring up that woman when we're outside!"

"Okay, okay, okay..."

I felt a painful sensation in my back. I scrubbed Nier's head with a smile. She

pouted, and then suddenly hugged me from the front. She bent down at her waist, thereby frightening me. My first reaction was, “We can’t do this on the streets”.

“What’s wrong?”

“Come on up, Your Majesty. I promised you that I’d carry you today!”

“Ah... I was joking...”

“No! I already said that I would. If you have the energy, then that means we’ll be able to do it even more times tonight!”

“No! No! Don’t!!”

Congratulations on your achievement...

You managed to get your pregnant wife to carry you through the streets...

## **Glossary**

\*In Chinese one way to express “jealous” is with the 醋 character meaning vinegar. So when Troy responded, he actually said (Lit. Translation) “Your vinegar is making my soup go sour...” I boldly assumed that you don’t say “I’m vinegar” to express jealousy in English, so I reworded it.

## **Ch. 07**

“Not bad, not bad.”

Shusia wiped her sweat on her forehead. She looked at Gerald, who stood in front of her and was in the midst of pulling his sword back. She continued with satisfaction, “Though you’re not a top-tier fighter, you could be considered a skilled fighter among the guards in the Royal Capital.”

Gerald chuckled awkwardly. They sparred for over ten rounds, but he was defeated by Shusia every single time. As a guy, he should’ve been going easy on her, but when they sparred, he discovered that he, at best, could only defend against her attacks despite his utmost efforts. After over ten rounds of sparring, Shusia was just breaking a sweat.

Gerald honestly admitted, “I never thought you were so formidable.”

Shusia hesitated for a moment before laughing with pleasure. She responded, “I am the Valkyries’ sword instructor, after all, and N(ier)-, our Princess’s favoured pupil. There’s no way I’d be poor with a sword.”

“Is the Princess... very skilled with a long-sword?”

Although he was in the Prince’s employ, Gerald didn’t know about the Prince or even the people around him. The only impression of the Princess was that she was an elf in an emerald dress by the Prince’s side. He recalled her from memory. He couldn’t see how the elf Princess was skilled with a sword.

“The Princess was the Valkyries’ sword instructor before she married His Majesty, and she was also Her Majesty’s favourite Valkyrie. There’s no way she could be poor with a sword now, is there?”

“What?! There was an elf amongst the Valkyries?!”

Gerald shouted at the top of his lungs. Shusia looked at him feeling stupefied. She asked with puzzlement, “How could there be an elf among the Valkyries? What are you on about?”

Gerald was completely confused as he stuttered, “But... did you not just say that the Princess was once a Valkyrie? Is the Princess not an elf? Her... her ears...”

Shusia tilted her head after she heard him explain himself. She then laughed and replied, “Oh, you’re talking about Princess Lucia. Princess Lucia is, indeed, an elf and also a Princess. However, His Majesty has another Princess in addition to Princess Lucia. His Majesty’s other Princess is Royal Princess Nier. Princess Nier was once a Valkyrie team captain. She’s a human. You could say that her marriage to His Majesty shook the hearts of all of the Valkyries. We’re all very jealous that she got to become Her Majesty’s daughter.”

Despite saying that, Shusia revealed a shy smile and went on, “But I have Philes now. I’m very happy, too. Philes is a very gentle man. I can feel the warmth of being valued when I’m with him. I truly like him very much...”

Gerald looked blankly at Shusia, who was shimmering with a shy and blissful expression.

Their romance truly came out of the blue. He never expected that a sparring match could trigger a romantic reaction out of her.

*‘Speaking of which... if Captain Philes dressed up and put on makeup, he would probably be prettier than Shusia...’*

*‘Are they really going to be okay? Is it okay for her husband to be prettier than her...?’*

Gerald is, actually, quite attracted to romance. He once had a childhood friend. The two of them grew up together. It’s just that she liked another guy... Not only did silly Gerald not win the heart of his affection, but he even became their letter delivery boy. In the end, he became the witness for their marriage... Of course, Gerald doesn’t hate them or feel sad about it. To the contrary, he was genuinely happy for them. It’s just that he can’t help, but sigh when he thinks about it.

After arriving in the Royal Capital and holding a respectable job Gerald changed his views. He decided to find a girl that was similar to him in terms of finance and standing. Of course, he had to like her, as well, and he’d like to get married with her. When he arrived at Troy City, Philes who caught his eyes, turned out to be a man, hurting the pure young man’s fragile soul. He now felt another blow to his heart after seeing Shusia flaunt her romance.

*‘It’s fine. It’s fine. There are plenty of maids in the palace.’*

He just had to take a stroll and he’d find beautiful young girls with smiles as pretty as flowers. He was definitely going to be able to find an ordinary, yet gentle wife.

“I think that your swordplay is all right. You meet the basic expectations for a bodyguard. Learning swordplay is something you will need to persist with. Go and report to Miss Freya for now. Come to me every afternoon, and I’ll teach you swordplay. Miss Freya is usually in the office in the afternoon, so she’ll be safe for sure during that time.”

Shusia tossed her sword aside then looked at Gerald with a smile, “Princess Nier fell in love with His Majesty when she worked as his bodyguard, which then led to them becoming a couple. The two of them are now very happy with each other. Gerald, Miss Freya is His Majesty’s adopted sister, so she is a royal

family member at the end of the day. You must do your best to protect her, understood?”

“Of course. I will do my best to protect Miss Freya! I cannot let His Majesty down when he trusts me so much!”

Gerald proudly puffed his chest and raised his head. Shusia gave him the “idiot” look, as well as a look of sympathy and confusion. She let out a heavy sigh, “Forget it. It looks as though your pureness is lethal. Maybe that’s why His Majesty trusted you with protecting Miss Freya...”

“Sorry... I honestly do not understand what you mean...”

Gerald looked at Shusia with puzzlement. He replayed what Shusia said to him in his head covered underneath his blonde hair. But try as he may, he couldn’t figure out what Shusia was trying to suggest. He thought that maybe she was encouraging him.

Shusia waved her hand and in an irritated manner, responded, “There’s no need for you to get it then. Go and see Miss Freya. She should be in the office at this time.”

*‘What in the...’*

Gerald went to the hall of the office while still utterly perplexed. This was his second time here at the office. He went to see Freya the first time he came, as well, except she shooed him out.

Gerald knocked on the door, and that caused the door to gently swing open. It didn’t appear to be closed. However, he didn’t get any response from inside. It was silent. Gerald hesitated for a moment before gently pushing the door open. Freya was lying there on the table, opposite where the sun shone. She resembled a kitten curled up under the sun. Gerald walked up to Freya with gentle steps. Freya’s fatigue on her forehead caused one’s heart to ache, because that sort of fatigue shouldn’t appear on the face of a kid.

*‘How much had the Prince’s adopted sister given up for him? She almost lost her life and spent her youth and energy for him every day. She was at the age where kids act wilful and spoilt, yet she had the fatigue and steady character that didn’t fit her age.’*

*'Is she really... doing all this voluntarily?'*

He saw Freya pressing down on a picture frame. She pressed down on it hard as though she was hugging the individual in the picture. It was as though holding the picture was the equivalent of holding her entire world. She wore a blissful smile even while sleeping. Gerald took a glance out of curiosity. The drawing was relatively childish and poor. Despite that, though, His Majesty's gentle smile was still lifelike, nonetheless...

## Ch. 08

"Onii-sama!!"

That was the first time I heard Freya shout so angrily. I could hear her shouting before she had even reached the dining hall. I placed my knife and fork down then wiped my mouth with my napkin while waiting for her to enter.

Angry she was. She charged into the dining hall with an enraged expression. She was fuming to the point that she could levitate if anger could fill you up similarly an air balloon. I looked at her while sitting at the table. With a smile I asked, "What's wrong, Freya? Did someone anger you?"

"Of course!! Get in here!!"

Freya pointed to the door while angrily shouting. I saw Gerald enter the dining hall with a nervous expression. He gave a deep bow when he saw me and greeted me, "Your Majesty! Your Majesty, good evening..."

"Uhm"

I nodded.

Lucia greeted him with a smile, "Good evening."

"..."

Nier ignored Gerald as if she didn't hear him.

Freya stood angrily with her arms akimbo. I don't know what the meaning of that action is. Maybe it's an instinctive action living organisms perform. She



wanted to appear a little intimidating, but unfortunately, it didn't do anything, but make Freya appear cuter to me. Freya was completely red in the face from anger. She pointed at Gerald and exclaimed, "He peeped on me sleeping!"

"I did not!!"

Gerald tried to explain himself with a red face.

"You watched me sleep!!"

"Stop for a second... please stop for a second you two..."

I extended my hand out to stop Freya, who was raging, and said, "Regardless of what happened, calm down first Freya and explain to me what happened. You said Gerald peeped on you sleeping, but it's not bedtime right now. It's only dinner time. Gerald was training in the afternoon, so how did he peep on our sleeping?"

"I... I... I was a little tired when I was in the office, so I lay down on the table to rest for a bit... Then... then he peeped on me sleeping!!"

Freya looked at me and spoke with her face all red. I wasn't sure if her face was red because she was shy or angry. I lingered for a moment before looking at Gerald.

*'Logically speaking, is getting caught sleeping on the table considered peeping on someone sleeping? I'm not convinced that people sleep at the table naked... Hence the question: does it count as Gerald peeping on her...?'*

I didn't say anything. Lucia, who was next to me, looked at Freya and in a serious tone said, "Freya... I don't think that counts as peeping on your sleeping, does it...? You were sleeping at the table and not in the room, after all. Plus, you weren't undressed, were you...? So, at most, Gerald only saw you sleeping at the table. I don't think there's any issue."

"Ugh..."

Freya, who was a master with words was now red in the face, but had no response. She had no choice, but to look toward Nier for help. She hoped Nier would help her by speaking up for her. Nier noticed Freya's gaze, so she placed the bread in her hand down, and then bluntly said, "Gerald is your personal

bodyguard.”

“So what if he is?! A personal bodyguard does not have the right to peep on me sleeping, either!!”

“It’s normal for a bodyguard to say by the side of the person that they’re to protect while they’re sleeping. I once watched His Majesty sleep until he woke up, as well. It’s no big deal to a bodyguard. We do that to protect you. You don’t need to mind it.”

Nier indicated that was all she had to say. She wasn’t willing to say anymore; thus, she picked up the bread. I chuckled awkwardly.

*‘The last time Nier watched me sleep, I didn’t get to sleep well. She didn’t give me any room to rest that night. She sat there next to my bed and grinded her sword. Let’s not forget that she was always dropping her classic line at the time. Yes, I’m referring to the classic, “Please kill yourself” line. I didn’t dare to sleep all night...’*

“Ugh... Onii-sama...”

Freya looked at me with puppy eyes. She looked pitiful as a little pet that was cornered. I sighed. I looked at Gerald, “I, basically, have a grasp of what happened now. You weren’t in the wrong this time, Gerald. I’d say that it was due to a lack of communication between you two. Gerald, you didn’t knock before entering, did you? It is, indeed, a little embarrassing for Freya to be spotted sleeping at her workplace. Neither of you were wrong in this incident, so just forget it.”

Freya pouted and grumpily muttered, “It was not because I was embarrassed...”

Gerald chuckled dryly then looked at me, “I did not actually see anything, honestly. I just saw Miss Freya hugg-...”

“Aaaahhh!!!”

Freya suddenly cried out, causing me to jump up from fright. Freya suddenly punched Gerald in his gut, causing him to bend over from the pain. She then bumped him from the side and pushed him out as he staggered. Freya and Gerald left the dining hall, just like that, while the three of us looked at them

feeling completely bewildered.

Wait, let me correct that. She beat him out of the dining hall.

“Just what... is up with those two...?”

I looked in the direction the two of them left in and shook my head feeling baffled. Nier snorted then snickered, “And thus, being a bodyguard isn’t a job anybody can do. There isn’t and never will be another bodyguard like me.”

*‘Yeah, Nier, you’re the only bodyguard who could ever tell the target they’re supposed to protect, “please kill yourself” at least twice daily. I believe that Gerald won’t ever say that even once...’*

*‘Was I too tolerant with Nier back then...?’*

“Wait. Your Highness, there is something I would like to confirm. Why was Nier able to watch you sleep before you got married...? Did something already happen between you and Nier back then...? Your highness, if something did happen during that time and you have not yet told me.... That is a bloody betrayal...”

“Let me explain! Lucia! Listen to my explanation!!!”

=====

Gerald wore a helpless smile as he followed behind Freya, who was grumpily walking away. The pain from being hit by the young girl a few times was still there... He couldn’t understand why Freya was angry. He woke her up out of good will and even complimented her drawing of His Majesty. But then, Freya jumped up with a red face similarly to an angry kitten.

He couldn’t figure out just what he did wrong...

Freya suddenly spun her head around to face Gerald and shouted, “Don’t follow me!!”

“I cannot do that, Miss Freya. I am under orders from His Majesty to protect you. How could I let you go around at night?”

Gerald resolutely refused. He completely ignored the young girl’s anger and order. Freya had no rebuttal. She angrily spun around and sat down on the steps. She complained, “Damn it... I was careless... I can’t believe I forgot to

close the door... Nevertheless, you are not to tell anyone about this, understood...? That was so embarrassing...”

“Aahh, I understand. I understand. Falling asleep at work is embarrassing. I once fell asleep while on duty and snored. My friend discovered that I had dozed off, and so I had to bribe him with seven bronze coins to treat him to a drink so that he would not expose me!”

Gerald looked at Freya with pride. He noticed that the young girl he had to protect was no longer angry and genuinely felt very happy. He wanted to get Freya to laugh with his embarrassing history.

Freya didn’t laugh, though; instead, she looked at him with pity and at the same time as if he was a blithering idiot. She hesitated for a moment before asking, “You’re... you’re a not a retard, are you...?”

“That is rude!! I am not stupid. I learn everything quickly.”

“Okay, okay, okay. You’re not retarded. You’re not retarded.”

Freya then let out a sigh of relief. She then looked at him with a ridiculing smile with her head tilted. She continued, “But I bet you don’t have a wife. Actually, I bet you haven’t even had a girlfriend. Wait, wait, wait, you probably don’t even have a girl that likes you, huh? I can tell with one glance that you’re a kid with no life!”

“H-How did you know...? I... I am not that pitiful! I... I have a girl I could marry!”

Gerald fought back with a red face. Though he said that, his gaze that lacked confidence and his red face was a dead giveaway that he was telling a lie that not even he, himself, believed.

“Do you want to know how I know?”

Freya stood up with a mischievous smile then turned around and went up. She then turned her head around with a smile and continued, “Of course, it was because I guessed, you idiot.”

## Ch. 09

“Onii-sama, Her Majesty has replied. She has set out and should arrive at Troy City within four days.”

“Ah, got it.”

I nodded. I then looked at Freya and, “The letter should’ve reached the elven Imperial Capital by now too. Don’t worry about Mommy Vyvyan for now. She’ll come here as soon as the letter reaches her. Freya, you go on and prepare. This banquet is very important.”

“I understand, Onii-sama.” Freya nodded seriously, and then went on, “If we can resolve this matter this time, you are going to make a trip to Socina City, correct?”

“Yes.” I nodded then explained, “I don’t think I’ll be staying there for long though. I’ll stay there for a month at most.”

“All right.” Freya nodded then made a small bow and said, “There is nothing else, then. Onii-sama, I shall take my leave now.”

“Freya, wait.”

I called for Freya then looked outside the door. Since the two of us were discussing work, Gerald had no right to come in and listen. Freya looked at me and in a puzzled tone asked, “Is there anything else, Onii-sama?”

“I wanted to ask if you slept well last night.”

Freya dawdled for a moment before replying, “Are you worried that Gerald would do something to me? He will not do anything. He does not plan to, and more importantly, he does not have the guts to.”

“No, I’m not worried about Gerald. I just want to know if you have been sleeping well recently.”

I stroked Freya’s face, and then touched the corner of her eye. I continued in a gentle tone, “You’ve got bags under your eyes, and you fell asleep in the office yesterday. Freya, are you too worn out these days? If you aren’t sleeping well at night, let me know. Let me see if I can help you.”

Freya lingered for a moment. She then lowered her head a little in my hand. After hesitating for a moment, she softly replied, “I miss Sis Luna... I really miss Sis Luna... Whenever I had little awakenings at night, Sis Luna would be lying next to me holding my hand, allowing me to sleep in peace... but... Sis Luna is not here anymore... I am the only one in the room... I am so sad. I am so scared... I...”

I suddenly pulled Freya tightly into my arms before she could finish. Freya reacted with a jerk, and then grabbed my arms tightly. I noticed her small body trembling. She clenched her teeth tightly to prevent herself from crying out loud.

*‘She’s too tough. Far too tough. She almost had an accident, as a consequence of the incident, too, but she never said a thing. She didn’t cry when Luna passed away, either. Instead, when I was in the depths of despair and hurt, she was the one who faced the Empress on my behalf. After returning to Troy City, she took on all of the work so that I could relax for a bit. She dragged her tired body to a dark room. I didn’t even notice it; I didn’t realise her suffering.’*

“Sorry, Freya, sorry... I was negligent... Sorry.”

I gently stroked Freya’s head.

*‘She’s too small. She’s so small that I can hug her so tightly in my arms. She’s just a kid, yet she’s gone through so much and shouldered so much. She’s too tough. So tough that I’m afraid, worried, and can’t bear to watch her suffer...’*

“It is all right... It is all right... Onii-sama...”

Freya wept in my arms. She took in big breaths, trying her best to use her breathing to cover her tears. In my arms, she softly said, “Onii-sama, you do not need to apologise... You are in more pain than I am. You lost Sis Luna... You risked your life to clash with Her Majesty and even now, you are trying to stop a conflict between the two races. You are hurting more than I am. I truly cannot bear... I cannot bear to make you worry about me when you are suffering so much already... I truly... cannot bear to...”

“Silly girl. How could my heart not ache for you...? You need to... tell me about these things. Luna’s departure does, indeed, hurt me; however, if I see you sad, I will only suffer more...”

I massaged Freya's small head. I then looked at her face and chuckled softly. I wiped the tears on her face, "You are my most beloved and cutest sister. How can a brother watch his sister suffer and not do anything...? Freya, sleep with Lucia from now on. If you want to, you can come to my room at night, too. I'm fine with it."

*'I believe Nier won't mind. I actually hope that Freya can come and restrain Nier, too.'*

Freya responded with firm nods, "Uhm! Uhm!"

She then snuggled up on my chest. She wiped her tears on her face then looked up at me with a very bright smile. I pinched her face and she said, "Onii-sama, I will. I want to go to your room tonight. You will not mind, would you?"

I nodded, "I won't. Just come tonight, then."

"Uhm, understood, Onii-sama! I shall take my leave now."

"You don't need to be in such a hurry. I'll come with you."

I let go of Freya and grabbed hold of her hand. Freya hesitated before looking at me to say, "Your Majesty, do you not need to go out with the Princess today? If you stay with me, you will be stuck in the office all day, you know? Well, there is not much work, and I, alone, can finish it."

"It is my work, after all. I wouldn't be a kind and wise ruler if I put it all on you while having fun outside. I've had enough rest and need to return to work seriously now. Luna is not a reason for me to be negligent. To the contrary, it's motivating me to advance."

I scrubbed her head, and then continued, "Let's go. It's been a very long time since I've dealt with Troy City's business. I need your advice on lots of things. If we finish work early today, let's go for some tea and refreshments together. You can choose where we go."

"Sure! Do not deliberately go slow then, Onii-sama. You must concentrate when working, too. You are the one who said you would come and work with me; therefore, do not let yourself get distracted during work with the Princesses." Freya's eyes lit up with joy. She held my hand and said, "Let us be on our way now then, Onii-sama."

“Uhm.”

I held her hand and pulled the door open. Gerald walked up from the side and hesitated for a moment when he saw us exit together. I gave him a nod. He bowed and greeted me, “Your Majesty...”

I looked at him and said, “I’m going to work with Freya today. You’re training in the afternoon, right? You can head over now.”

“Yes.”

Gerald raised his head up. He then looked at Freya, who was holding His Majesty’s hand with surprise. The arrogant and mischievous young girl looked up at His Majesty with a very earnest and reliant gaze. She wore a smile that was bright and innocent. Her eyes were filled with bliss comparable to spring water.

Gerald watched them leave and remarked to himself, “So... she does smile the way that a child would...”

## Ch. 10

“Your Majesty, I think it would be very dangerous for you to go alone...”

Elizabeth placed her stuff down then looked at Castell with a frown and responded, “How would I be in danger? I’m going to Troy City, which is where my son is. Are you saying that my son would harm me?”

In a concerned voice, Castell replied, “After His Majesty stormed the cemetery last time, it cannot be completely ruled out.”

“I was, indeed, in the wrong last time. Perhaps I underestimated how my son would retaliate. He’s always kind and gentle in front of me. I always saw him as a kid, but I was foolish, too. He’s my son; if he’s my son, he can’t possibly be a weakling. My son, who’s kind and gentle in front of me is definitely hot-blooded, too. It’s perfectly normal for him to get angry when he’s hot-blooded, but he won’t harm me. I’m his mother. I forever will be his mother.”

“What about on the way then? Are you not worried?”



“I’ll just bring a sword.”

“Your sword is with His Majesty right now!”

“Castell, don’t tell me you think my skills were all a result of having the Elven King sword.”

Elizabeth snickered, “Even without the long sword my husband gave me, you’d need hundreds of people to kill me. While I am getting old, my skills have never rusted. I’m going to my son’s city this time. There won’t be any danger. Further, I know that woman Vyvyan will be there for sure, as well.”

“You and the Elven Queen just had a fight. If you go over there now, I suggest you bring your guards.”

“With my son there, that woman won’t attack me upfront. I, on the other hand, do want to go after her.” Elizabeth looked at the small exquisite box on her table. That box had appeared once before. The last time it appeared was when she had Freya use this poison to kill Lucia. This time, she was bringing the drug with her.

The effects of this drug are more powerful the more powerful an elf’s mana. As a demi-god, Vyvyan would probably die as soon as she touched it. Elizabeth opened the small box and looked at the pearl inside. She gently pinched it and absentmindedly said, “Our fight ten years ago was inconclusive, so I knew that this day would come. I signed the ceasefire agreement with her, but I will not hand over my son. I have been separated from my son for too long already. It wasn’t easy to see him again. It wasn’t easy for me to obtain the bliss and life I wanted. I’ll betray the entire world and give the entire world up if I must, but never will I let my son go. I would presume Vyvyan would think the same for sure...”

“Then, you...”

“I have to go despite that”, Elizabeth stood up. Her gaze was filled with determination as firm as steel. She looked to the north and clenched her teeth. She continued on, “As I am a mother, my son’s mother. I don’t want to anger my son, because of some feelings. Last time, my feelings for Alice almost turned us against each other. I now understand that only my son is the most important to me. I don’t care about others anymore. I just want for my son to call me

‘mom’. That’s all I want. Compared to before, Vyvyan’s friendship with me is worth nothing. I no longer... want to let my son be so sad...”

Castell looked at Elizabeth with a complex look. He smiled bitterly, “What you just said makes us sad as your vassals.”

“That’s because you’re all people in my cage. You could even say that you’re the people that locked the cage. Even you only said that you would make my cage a little more comfortable.”

Elizabeth revealed a tender smile then touched Castell’s head, “But my son said that he wanted to destroy my cage. There have only been two people from those around me that have said that. One is my husband, and the other is my son. They were the only ones who ever said that.”

Elizabeth laughed softly then went on, “That’s why there’s no way I can’t help but like them. How could I not love them? When I needed to be protected, they were the only ones to say they would protect me.”

Castell looked at her. Her expression was very subtle. He tightly clenched his fists, looked at her and spaced out. It was the first time she revealed such a soft, timid and blissful expression. She only ever showed her domineering and proud look in front of him. She only ever revealed a consoled smile at other times. Such a smile could be the one reward he would be most proud of.

However, over ten years at her side couldn’t make the empress as happy as a single sentence from Troy. The Empress had never smiled that way in front of him, and she won’t in the future, either, for that smile belonged to Troy.

He was just a substitute after all. He was just Troy’s substitute. Now that Troy was in front of her, it was best for him to say no more if he didn’t want to end up with the same fate as Alice. He just had to act as a toy that’d been tossed to a corner.

“Understood. I shall prepare for after your departure now then.”

Castell didn’t say anything else. He made a deep bow, and then turned to leave.

Her Majesty didn’t stop him. She, instead, placed the poison in her hand into the small box in a manner as though she was placing her wedding ring inside.

She looked at it with a sad and burdened look as she gradually fell into deep thought.

=====

“Aaah... that hurts.....”

Gerald rubbed his shoulder while speaking to himself with a helpless smile. He had just finished with his training. Shusia showed no mercy while training him. Although they used wooden swords, hit hard enough and it can still inflict some serious pain. Plus, even when he showed his pain with his expression, Shusia didn't stop.

*‘That demonic instructor has no pity to give...’*

As soon as Gerald turned a corner, a faint floral scent came toward him from the front. The fragrance was particularly aromatic. He looked up to see a breathtaking beauty in an emerald dress glide past him similarly a butterfly that just appeared out of the blue. The sight caused the young man to forget to continue walking as he was captivated by her, which led to him staring at her in a daze.

Vyvyan noticed him staring at her, so she softly giggled, and then turned around to look at him. She asked, “Are you a new guard?”

“Ah... Yes...”

“No wonder. I shall forgive you for your rudeness, then.”

Vyvyan pursed her lips into a smile and then looked at the guard with red ears. It was as though she could see the young man's heart pounding away as though it'd gone crazy. She smiled, “I am Troy's mother as well as the Elven Queen. You should salute me when you see me. But nonetheless, since you were unaware, I shall not blame you. Where is my son right now?”

“I am very sorry... Your Highness... umm... umm...”

“I want to know where my son is right now. I'm not after your apology.”

A tinge of annoyance appeared in Vyvyan's blue eyes as she repeated herself.

“Ah, right... His Majesty, His Majesty is in the office at the moment...”

“I see.”

Vyvyan paid him no heed after. She was already used to it. She was used to seeing young men being swept off their feet by her beauty when they first met her. In fact, she didn't feel happy to know that anymore. She sped up as she headed toward her son's location.

*'If only my son would react that way when he sees me...'*

## Ch. 11

Vyvyan wore a smile as she stroked my head and asked, “Son, Mommy was very happy to receive your letter, but Mommy wants to know what you called Mommy here for. I believe that you didn't want to just simply invite Mommy to a banquet, right?”

I, did, indeed have something very important to say, and there's no way that Mom doesn't know about it. However, Mom might not be aware that I already know about it. I believe that my two moms will still stubbornly carry out their plan even if somebody tried to advise otherwise. Vyvyan will never back down when it comes to me, while Elizabeth started a war for me a decade ago, so she can do it again now. Consequently, if I don't step up and let the war break out, then the disaster from a decade ago will repeat itself.

*'Ten years ago, Troy was just eight and didn't understand things, but ten years later, I'm Troy. I understand war, so I will not let my moms wage another war for this sort of reason.'*

*'I believe that Vyvyan took the initiative to make me the Elven King so that I can return to the elven side in peace. The incident with Alice caused Vyvyan to lose all trust in Elizabeth, as well as humanity. Perhaps the continuous attempts on my life have deterred her from wanting to let me to continue living in humanity's lands. Vyvyan wanted for me to return to the elves and live in peace from the beginning. I won't be questioned by others in the elven lands thanks to my mana purity and lineage. Moreover, I was guaranteed to be safe with Vyvyan, who's a demi-god, there to protect me.'*

*‘Vyvyan must’ve perceived everything I did as a child’s wilful desire to chase a dream, I guess. However, I ended up tripping and getting hurt; she, therefore, must think that the childish games should end now similarly to when it’s time for a child that’s played enough to come home. That’s why she wants to use the Imperial Capital and Elven King throne to chain me so that I’d stay there where it’s safe and not leave again.’*

*‘But I didn’t do what I did for the throne in either nation. I just want to prove myself for Mera and Luna. I’m not playing nor am I chasing something deliberately because I’m wilful. I just want to achieve salvation for myself so that I can face their graves.’*

*‘I can’t return. If I return, I’ll never get to leave again. Although I can face Mera, I can’t face Luna. I’m certain Luna didn’t want to see me be a man that fled from bloodshed and wounds. She always accompanied me on my long journeys without complaints or regrets. If I run away now, wouldn’t I have let her company go to waste and let her down?’*

*‘Everybody dies, but not everybody lived. I should have a longer lifespan than that of a human’s. Therefore, I should live a life that’s different. Even if my life isn’t longer and, in fact, shorter, I can still leave my mark in the short time after transmigrating.’*

“Mom, I am, indeed, looking for you for something, but it’s pointless to speak to you about it alone, for this requires the two involved parties to agree ...”

“Impossible.”

Vyvyan resolutely cut me off before I could even finish. She released me, and then looked into my eyes with anger, “I know what you want to say, but Mommy won’t back down on this matter. Mommy isn’t just trying to make you succeed the throne. If Mommy wanted to keep you by Mommy’s side all the time, Mommy would’ve done that already. It’s just that Mommy has no faith for humanity. Elizabeth kept claiming she’d protect you, but whenever was she able to? You got hurt over and over in humanity’s lands. You got another scar on your hand before the one on your chest disappeared. Had Mommy been just a moment late, would you still be here? Well, you do never consider Mommy when you dive into danger... You never consider how scared and hurt Mommy

was...”

Vyvyan’s sobs crept into her voice as she finished up. I didn’t say anything. I just tightly held Mom’s hands. I was aware that I made Mommy Vyvyan worry more than just once or twice. Mommy Vyvyan must be tired of being worried over and over. Her persistence to have me return to the elven lands is just the way any mother would react. Mothers want to keep their children by their side so that they can keep their children away from danger.

I do remember the saying “Our bodies—to every hair and bit of skin—are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them.” The saying goes as so since your parents would be very worried if you got hurt, which is not how you show filial piety. A little extreme it may be, but it describes Vyvyan perfectly. I promised Mommy Vyvyan over and over that I wouldn’t let myself be in danger, yet I let myself get covered in wounds every single time.

*‘I want to realise my dream, but I have never considered how sad Mommy Vyvyan would be.’*

“Sorry mom...”

“Mommy doesn’t want your apology!!”

Vyvyan grabbed my hand. She used so much strength that I could virtually see her white joints on my fingers. Her voice and body were both shaky. Anxiety and her pleas surfaced in her blue eyes. She looked at me and while trembling, sobbed, “Mommy wants you to come home. You’ve apologised too many times already. Mommy believed you every time. Mommy went soft and let you go every time, but you’d return to Mommy covered in wounds every time, nonetheless. Mommy is tired. Mommy is honestly tired. Son, if you are truly apologetic, if you truly don’t want Mommy’s heart to ache so much, come home with Mommy, okay? Mommy doesn’t want anything. Mommy just wants you to come home...”

I didn’t dare to look at Mom’s eyes. I truly didn’t dare to.

*‘I believe that if I were to look at Mom’s eyes, I would definitely agree to her request. I can’t reveal my stance right now. Actually, I can’t agree to return. If I agree now, Mom will take me home for sure.’*

*‘But my heart is, in all honesty, throbbing. I’m truly sorry to Mommy Vyvyan. Mommy Vyvyan may be a little strange, but she truly only ever thought of me, alone. Mommy Elizabeth thinks about others and her empire, but Mommy Vyvyan only ever thought about me, alone. Why did I scare her over and over again?’*

*‘My life isn’t mine alone. My life is connected to Mommy Vyvyan’s. I’m Mommy Vyvyan’s whole world. If something happens to me, I can only presume that Mommy Vyvyan’s entire world would collapse.’*

*‘But still, I can’t just leave this way. I’m very sorry to Mommy Vyvyan; nevertheless, she’s not the only one in my world. My world also comprises of Nier, Lucia, Luna and Freya. The world I perceive isn’t just the area around the forest, but a wider and further unknown land.’*

*‘If Vyvyan hypothetically wasn’t my mom, but my lover, I might give up everything for love.’*

“Sorry... Mom...”

“Mommy doesn’t want your apology!!!!”

“But all I can do right now is give you my apology, Mom!!”

I pressed my arms firmly on Vyvyan’s shoulders and looked at her teary blue eyes that were akin to the sea. In a loud voice and sobbing tone, I said, “Mom... I can’t promise you anything right now... I can only give you an apology... Please... I beg you... let me apologise... I promise that once I finish what I want to finish, I will definitely stay by your side. I promise. You have lots of time, so please... give me a bit more time...”

Vyvyan froze up as she looked at my face. It was the first time I saw her helpless gaze. I didn’t know she had such a pitiful gaze. Mommy Vyvyan quivered as she lowered her head. She grabbed my arm tightly and wept. She thumped her head on my chest hard as though she was resisting the urge to give me a thrashing. I kept silent. I tightly hugged Mommy Vyvyan in order to let her feel my strength and warmth...

“Please... Please... Son... My brother has made me wait for so long... Don’t make me wait for so long, too... Mommy does have lots of time, yes... but

Mommy doesn't want... to wait all alone..."

Despite the timing, despite how sad she was and despite the countless number of times she prepared herself mentally to persist with her plan, she still ended up giving in when she was in front of me...

*'I truly... truly... am so apologetic to Mommy Vyvyan...'*

*'If I have a chance and if I still have time, then I will definitely return to Mommy Vyvyan's side and be her son forever. I will make up the time she spent waiting for me. I will accompany her through the years and use the remainder of my life to erase my wilful agendas that I forced on her...'*

## Ch. 12

Nier placed the cup in her hand down and asked, "Freya is coming over tonight, right...?"

"Yes, so we'll have to squeeze in."

"I shall take my leave then." Nier then stood up and added, "I shall sleep alone tonight."

"Nier, are you angry?"

Nier shook her head, "No. I already know why Freya is coming over, and you only view her as your sister. I'm not jealous. It's just that I can't do that happy stuff with you at night with Freya present. I, therefore, have no need to sleep with you. It would be very awkward for all of us if all three of us slept together, no? Furthermore, to be frank, I don't like seeing another woman lie next to you, so it's better if I sleep alone."

"So the main reason you slept with me was..."

"Shouldn't that be the reason a husband and wife sleep together?! If not, why would they have to sleep together? What other reason would there be for a husband and wife to be together at night if not to do *that*?!"

Nier looked at me with the expression where her view of world, the value of



life and marriage views was challenged. It was frightening. She threw me the question with a terrifying gaze...

*'All right, it looks as though we need to re-wire all of those views for you, Valkyrie. I agree, the things we do every night are most certainly things husband and wife can do, but it's not a necessity! You need breaks from it every now and then, understand?! You need breaks! Moreover, sleeping separately, just because we can't do that makes our marriage look extremely fragile!'*

After Mommy-Vyvyan finished speaking with me, she made it clear that she wanted to sleep with me. However, I rejected her, as I had already promised to have Freya over tonight, hence making Vyvyan sleep alone. Although she just cried and was very weak, I couldn't make it up to her tonight. I also thought that the likelihood of her doing something to me tonight was particularly likely, precisely because of her very weak state.

Nier didn't get jealous, though; therefore, Freya could come. After saying goodnight to each other and giving her a kiss, I left Nier behind and left the room. Let me preface that I honestly only see Freya as a younger sister. I harbour no crooked thoughts for her. I will not do anything that crosses the line to my sister tonight!

Besides, Freya is still just a kid who wasn't fully developed. I have Lucia, Nier and even Vyvyan... Wait, please cross the last name off. What I'm trying to mention is how developed they are, not our relationship... I have no reason to go for Freya...

After returning to the room, I looked at the empty room and randomly felt nostalgic. When I entered my room in the elven lands for the first time, I thought I was alone...

"You're so slow, Your Highness."

I looked at Lucia, who sat up from my bed, feeling absolutely stunned...

*'Okay, with Lucia here, it's the exact same feeling as when I first entered my room. Everything is the same, other than the location.'*

"Lucia, if my memory does me justice, did you not decide not to come to my room, since you couldn't sleep at night, but didn't want to disturb me?"

After the passionate phase, Lucia returned to being excited at night. The reason Lucia was willing to generously let Nier have the night slot was due to her struggle to sleep at night. She couldn't help herself from waking me up at night or touching me until I woke up. She could only sleep at dawn, and hence, she slept in her own room.

It's fine for Freya to live in with her, since Lucia wouldn't do anything to her, even if she was awake.

"But you said that you would sleep with Freya tonight." Lucia looked at me with an expression as though this was a matter of course. I, on the other hand, couldn't see how the two things were related. I sat down next to her and embraced her. She leaned onto my shoulder, and I played with her hair gently. I replied, "I don't understand how Freya coming over has anything to do with you. Or was it because you wanted to come over, too?"

"While I might disturb you, didn't you say that I'd be sleeping with Freya from now on? That's why I came with Freya."

Lucia spoke proudly as though it was natural and right, thereby leaving me with no response. I nodded hopelessly, "That wasn't what I meant, but... whatever..."

Lucia giggled, and then turned around to leap onto the bed. She rolled around similarly to an elated dog then lied on the bed and up at the ceiling. Then, she spaced out. In a somewhat melancholic tone, she said, "Your Highness, how long has it been since we've been able to have this sort of moment? I remember that I would be in your room every night in the past as the two of us lay in bed chatting, reading or just lazing around on the bed. It's been so long, hasn't it...? Remembering it now, everything that's happened feels a little surreal."

I went to lie down with Lucia and interlocked my fingers with hers. I felt her warmth and gentleness. I softly remarked, "Yeah, it's been a very long time, Lucia. We haven't been together for a very long time."

"How odd. We were together for so long, but we then had few chances to be together after getting married... Your Highness, are you leaving again in a few days? I don't feel that I can travel and be physically active anymore..."

Lucia held my hand tightly. I looked at her feeling a little concerned. Lucia, however, didn't reveal a sad expression. Lucia must've made up her mind already.

"Lucia... Sorry..."

"Your Highness, you don't need to be sorry. This is your business. You're doing what you should, so why must you feel sorry?" Lucia turned her face to the side and smiled, "Honestly, this isn't bad. In the past, I didn't think much of being with you as I am now; however, I feel incomparably reassured and blissful nowadays. Therefore, this isn't bad, is it? I have loved you for over ten years already, so I will continue this way forever."

"Lucia..."

I rolled onto my side, and so did Lucia. We got closer to each other. Our faces were just centimetres away. I could see Lucia's eyelashes flapping.

We got closer and Lucia closed her eyes.

"Onii-sama, what happened to telling me to come over without a worry? Are you trying to show off your affection with the Princess or are you trying to hint something to me...?"

"No! It's not what you think! It's a misunderstanding! Freya, listen to my explanation! Don't go! Listen to me!!"

Thus, for the next few minutes, Lucia used her crooked logic to explain why she appeared here to the intelligent Freya... Nevertheless, I was caught in a pincer attack at the end that night. None of them left...

## Ch. 13

I'd say this must be the dinner with the most pressure I've ever had.

I didn't actually hold a banquet. It was just a small family dinner with the three of us, except that it wasn't sat up as a dinner for a family of three, but rather two moms and one son.

My two moms didn't get into a physical fight when they met as I expected them to. I thought the two of them would fight without a word upon meeting, but the two of them didn't argue or fight. They, instead, acted as though they didn't know each other... Well, not quite. Basically, they acted as though they couldn't see each other.

Vyvyan and Elizabeth didn't look at each other. They focused their eyes on me. My original plan with the banquet was to smooth out their relationship, but instead, it became extremely harmonious and quiet for some odd reason. They looked at me with a kind gaze and never looked at each other. Though the atmosphere felt very cosy, it actually scared the living daylights out of me.

"Umm... moms..."

I felt that I couldn't let this continue. If this continued, they'd never speak to each other even by the time they were dead. Heck, they might start fighting as soon as I turned my head away.

"You only have one mom."

"You only have one mom."

The two of them looked at me and spoke out at the same time.

"All right... Your Majesty, Your Highness."

Hopeless, I changed the way I referred to them. I watched the two of them as I raised my cup of wine up, "No matter what happened in the past, my purpose in calling you both here this time is to smooth out your relationship. The both of you are my very important m-... erm... seniors. Therefore, I don't want for me to become the reason that you two don't speak to each other again."

The two of them glared at each other with eyes brimming with murderous intent, but they didn't say a word. I looked at them. I smiled helplessly as I reached my hand out to grab their hands and said, "Regardless of how you two hate each other, don't be so obvious about it in front of your son. Raise your cups. Can we give each other a toast?"

The two of them exchanged glares. They both ridiculed each other with their eyes that were filled with hatred. It was as though asking them to give each other a toast was worse than asking them to pick up their blades and duke it

out. After exchanging glares, Elizabeth then picked up her cup of wine and after a sigh, coldly said, "Since you have requested that of me, I must naturally fulfil your request as your mom. Though we both know that it's impossible for us to resolve our opposing stances, I don't want to do anything rude in front of my child."

Elizabeth lifted her cup of wine up and looked at Vyvyan with a gaze that sent her a challenge. It was, basically, a provocation which read, "Do you have the courage to pick up your cup?"

Vyvyan looked at her with a cold look. She then raised her cup, as well, "I don't want to make my son upset, either. My son is a very gentle child. He will be sad if somebody sheds blood here. I don't want to fight with you today, so let's drink this cup, and we can then discuss the future at a later date."

"All right. Cheers."

The two of them clink their cups against each other hard causing the red wine inside to rise up. A fair bit of their wine spilt into the cup of the other. I noticed that both of them had vicious curses in their eyes. In that moment, I recalled what Freya told me at the start of this. She warned, "If a large volume of their wine spills into the cup of the other when they clink their cups, you must snatch their cups away from them. Her Highness and Her Majesty do not want to see something happen to you. If they have prepared for war already, we cannot rule out the possibility that they would try to poison each other. If something happens to one of them, the war this time will be more terrifying than the last."

Hence, I immediately pressed down on both of their hands. Before they could react, I quickly snatched their cups from them. They jolted. I quickly brought the two cups up to my mouth before saying anything.

"Son!!"

"Son!!"

The two of them yelled out at the same time and acted together. The wine in my left hand froze while the cup on my right hand got shattered with a knife. Red wine and glass fragments rained down onto the ground.

My two moms looked at me with a frightened and shocked gaze. After seeing

that I didn't drink any, they let out sighs of relief. They then immediately pounded the table and got up. They shouted at each other, "You actually poisoned the drink?!"

*'I don't think either of you have the right to be angry.'*

The two of them understood that, so they didn't continue after shouting. I silently placed the cup of wine down then let out a heavy sigh, "Ladies, may I know what caused you two to become this way? From what I know, even if your relationship was worse, it's not so bad that you'd want to kill each other."

"It's obvious that it's because of this woman! Son, have you not realised it yet?! Whenever you're with her, you get hurt. She has failed to protect you time and time again. But that's not all. She's even willing to ignore your safety for the sake of those around her. I already wanted to kill her when she was shouting at me while I controlled that nutcase!"

Vyvyan coldly glared at Elizabeth. She clenched her teeth tightly, and then exclaimed, "Also, this woman wants to stop me from taking you back. You should be the Elven King in the first place. You have no reason to stay here to keep getting hurt. Humans have no loyalty or honour to speak of. They only know money and power!"

"What do you know?! That was my mistake and I have already acknowledged my mistake to my son. He's already forgiven me. What right do you have to point fingers? He's my son to begin with, so he should succeed my throne. He should be by my side. If that's how you want to play, my son should've been healthy. Why did he end up with berserk mana?!"

"I had to do that! I had to do that if I wanted my son to survive!"

"The same goes for me!"

Elizabeth and Vyvyan furiously glared at each other. Elizabeth then mocked her, "You're but just a substitute."

Vyvyan didn't take a single step back. She coldly shot back, "What about you, then? You gave birth, and then ran off as those women from the red-light district do."

"I must take my son back."

“Did I give you my permission, yet?!”

“Go die, then. I don’t need to consider the opinion of the dead now, do I?”

“Oh, really? Make sure your words and actions match.”

The two of them glared at each other angrily. With their anger clashing, Vyvyan and Elizabeth no longer wanted to bother with me. Elizabeth had drawn her sword. The two of them truly wanted to kill the other. They had no intention of showing each other any mercy.

“Umm... moms...”

“Son, don’t speak for now. It’ll be over soon.”

“You’re right. You soon won’t be able to speak anymore.”

I silently placed the plate in my hand down, and then they both suddenly turned their heads to look in my direction. They looked at me with horrified expressions.

“If I don’t exist, does that mean you two won’t have to fight this way anymore?”

I staggered a few steps. My vision turned blurry. I felt a burning sensation throughout my entire body. This is the same feeling as when Mera stabbed me. It felt as if my mana was burning my entire body.

“Son!! Son!”

“Son!! Son!”

The last sight that I saw was their horrified eye’s, and then the foggy ceiling. I passed out after that.

## Ch. 14

Honestly, I was genuinely slightly worried I that wouldn’t wake up.

Fortunately, I did.

I only found out how foolish what I did was afterwards. The stuff I drank was

primarily a poison Mommy Elizabeth prepared. If it wasn't for my half-elf DNA, I would've died instantly. As I'm only half-elf, my human composition wasn't affected after my mana was destroyed. Vyvyan swiftly replenished my mana to save me from a life-threatening danger.

However, I ended up scaring the daylights out of them. When I came to, my two moms leapt over and hugged me tightly. I nearly died from suffocation instead of poisoning.

While hugging me tightly, Vyvyan sobbed, "Son... my son... you scared Mommy... you scared Mommy... Don't do something silly again. Never do something silly again. Mommy won't argue in front of you again. Mommy promises... Don't scare Mommy..."

"Yeah, yeah... Son... Don't do that sort of thing again... Mommy won't argue or fight anymore... Mommy will withdraw the army. Mommy won't start a war, so don't do that sort of stuff... How is Mommy going to live if something happens to you...?"

On the other side, Mommy Elizabeth hugged me tightly. I felt something incomparably soft, yet heavy as a mountain press against me. My head was, basically, wrapped up tightly as the fragrances from all directions and softness cut off my oxygen supply.

*'I'm relatively weak right now, so if you two don't let go, I'm actually going to die!'*

Luckily, they seemed to realise my predicament, and thus, let go of me. Vyvyan quickly clasped my head first and stroked my face. I looked at Vyvyan's anxious and terrified blue eyes. She hastily asked, "How are you, son? Are you feeling sick anywhere or nauseous? Did I provide you with enough mana? Son, say something... don't scare Mommy. Hurry and say something..."

"Mom... I..."

I felt a painful sensation in my throat when I went to speak, and my voice was raspy. However, after hearing my voice, Vyvyan let out a big sigh of relief. She powerlessly leaned her entire body onto my chest as she gripped my clothes and loudly wept.



Elizabeth cupped my face from the other side and turned it so that she could see my face. She looked at me with an apologetic and regretful gaze. She sobbed, “Don’t scare Mommy... Don’t scare Mommy... How could you do something so silly, Son...? How could you do something so silly...? It’s all Mommy’s fault... It’s all Mommy’s fault..... Mommy promises... Mommy promises... Mommy won’t do that in front of you again... Mommy will not do that again, promise. Mommy won’t attack the elves... You can go wherever you want. You can return to the elves if you want... Mommy just wants for you to be safe and sound, okay...? Mommy just wants to see you safe and sound...”

Vyvyan raised up her face smothered with her tears to look at me. She tightly gripped my chest and loudly sobbed, “Mommy, too. Mommy, too... You can go anywhere you want. Mommy won’t stop you... Mommy will support all of your endeavours... as long as you don’t do something silly again... You scared Mommy... You scared Mommy to death... If something happened to you, how would Mommy live on? Mommy has no family. What would Mommy do...?”

*‘It appears that the self-inflicting pain tactic worked.’*

My original plan was to talk them out of it if I could, and if not, then that would be my last resort. However, the self-inflicting pain tactic I had in mind was meant to be me consuming poison myself. I never imagined that they enter killing mode so quickly. The poison I prepared for myself was with Freya, which had yet to be delivered, so I had to resort to consuming the poison they prepared.

Since Elizabeth dared to poison her own drink, it proves that the poison she used was ineffective against humans. Similarly, Vyvyan dared to poison her drink, which meant that her poison was ineffective against elves. I made a gamble with my half-elf nature, and it would seem that I won the gamble.

My moms were totally powerless before my self-inflicting pain ruse. Regardless of how much they hate each other, they won’t fight for as long as I’m around.

I think the continent should erect a tablet in my honour just for that alone. I put my life on the line to save the continent this time. I bet nobody on this continent imagined that their lives were saved by one man.

*'Who said I'm the safety switch for the two rulers? I'm the safety switch for this world.'*

"Moms..."

I looked to my two moms and struggled to swallow my saliva. Such a simple action now hurt immensely. Fortunately, I'm okay. I don't feel too weak. I just feel lightheaded; my vision is a blurry, and my throat is sore. I think I'll recover after a few days.

Vyvyan wiped her tears then looked at me with a determined look. She held my hand, "Go on, Son, and tell me. No matter where you decide to go, Mommy will agree, as long as you can return home on time. Worse comes to worse, Mommy shall follow you. Mommy doesn't need a throne or nation. Mommy just needs to stay by your side. Everything is fine, as long as Mommy can see you."

Although she said that, I could feel her hand that was holding mine quivering a little.

Elizabeth grabbed hold of my other hand and shook as she said, "Mommy, too. You can go to the elves' side if you want. Mommy can understand. Isn't Nier pregnant? Mommy can raise your child, and then come look for you after. Mommy doesn't care. You can go wherever you think is better. As long as you're alive and as long as you can live well, Mommy will come to you."

While they said that, I knew that, deep down, they must want for me to stay with them. They drew their weapons on each other over where I was supposed to go. They just handed over the right to choose to me now.

If you're asking me, Vyvyan definitely wants me to return with her while Elizabeth definitely wants me to stay. I've only defused the war from exploding, but I still need to resolve the issue of where I'm going. That was the origin of the reason of the war. If I don't resolve it, they might try to poison each other again.

Getting one of them to voluntarily back down is the way to resolve their conflict.

To me, it's simple to answer the question of which side I should go to. The

answer would be: neither. I no longer want to stay here with humanity and fight with this group who want to play politics, nor do I want to return to the elves with my tail between my legs and be an Elven King with no accomplishments to his name. While the two options are the simplest and most realistic, I don't want such a setting, where it's all been set in place.

*'I want my own territory.'*

*'This territory is Mommy Elizabeth's. The forest belongs to Mommy Vyvyan. If I continue living in their shadow forever, the tragedy with Luna will repeat itself. I want land where nobody questions me. I want land where I can be revered by all in peace.'*

*'I want to become a true King...'*

"Mom... I... I, actually..."

My two moms leaned in closer and tightened their grip on my hands. Their beautiful faces were full of nervousness and eagerness.

"I don't want to go to either place... Mom... I want to go to the North. I want to go north of the large canyon. I want to go and see the land there... I want to become a new King..."

## Ch. 15

"The North?"

Mommy Vyvyan paused, and then followed up by asking, "Son, do you want to go to the North of the large canyon?"

"Mommy doesn't know about the area North of the large canyon..."

Mommy Elizabeth pondered to herself for a while before saying, "Based on what I know, humanity has been to the North of the large canyon, but the information left behind on it is scarce. The elves occupy the land to the south of the large canyon. After I was born, nobody went to the North of the large canyon again. Hence, Mommy doesn't know much about it."

“Mommy doesn’t know about it, either despite being an elf. The only thing that Mommy can confirm is that there are, indeed, living organisms over there. I am referring to the trolls that rob us in the winter. Mommy doesn’t know any more than that. It’s too cold in the North. Elves can’t survive there. As a matter of fact, we must trace it back to hundreds of years ago.”

Vyvyan looked at my face and spaced out a little. She then elaborated, “The history goes back a long time ago. At the time, elves were still the leader of the continent and humans were just a small race that the elves protected. At the time, the elves were split among themselves. In other words, the elven war. Son, you know where the source of elves’ mana comes from, right?”

“The elven spring water?”

“Correct. The elven spring water is the source of elves’ mana. Put another way, it’s where the source of all mana for all living organisms is sourced from. It’s precisely because of that spring water flowing through the lands that the areas contain mana. For elves, mana was the right to rule. Mana is power. Therefore, all of the elven tribes revolved around the spring and fought a long war.”

I know about that part of history. It was the war where the elves fought amongst themselves. The elves that once flourished suffered a lot as a result of the war, which led to humanity suddenly replacing the elves as the ruler of the continent. The Galadriel Tribe, which defeated all of the other tribes, also became the leader of the elves for centuries, and they still are the leaders of the elves.

As the elves’ spring water is filled with mana, the Galadriel Tribe was able to purify their bloodline over the centuries to nurture Vyvyan, the most fearsome elf. While my mana is berserk, my mana purity level is still extremely high. If Elizabeth didn’t give birth to me once, I, myself, might be a demi-god.

“Our tribe emerged victorious in the end and acquired the elven spring water. At the time, the elven spring water wasn’t controlled. When it wasn’t controlled, the spring water freely flowed in every direction. At the time, the large canyon hadn’t been completely split open. It consisted of many small paths. It was the exact same as the elven lands at the time. It was a place with

birds chirping and fragrant flowers. After our tribe won, a number of elves that refused to submit to us were annihilated while others fled to the North and would occasionally attack us from time to time.”

Vyvyan looked at me with a slightly complex gaze. This part of history was, in essence, a dark part of the Galadriel Tribe’s history. But it was a necessary manoeuvre as the ruling race. Elizabeth and I let her continue without interruption. Mommy Vyvyan paused for a bit, and then went on, “You are a descendant of the Galadriel Tribe, too, Son, so I don’t need to hide anything from you. The Galadriel Tribe actually underwent an internal purge. At the time, the Galadriel tribe... It’s actually the same now. By that I mean the emphasis on lineages. All those with inferior lineages, those in opposition, prisoners of war and people viewed as insignificant were exiled to the North by the tribe. They were sent there under the pretext of aiding in development, but it was, in actual fact, a big exile movement. The elves that were exiled at the time made up about half of the Imperial Capital’s population. All of them were driven out to the North...”

“And then the road to the Imperial Capital was cut off after?”

Vyvyan shook her head, “It wasn’t just that simple. Son, you must know that going from having mana to lacking mana will cause an elf to die. By the same principle, land which lacks mana will also die. The reason the weather in the elven forest doesn’t show any changes is because it’s maintained by mana. At the time, the Galadriel Tribe – in other words, our ancestors – did the most vicious thing possible. Not only did they destroy all the small paths that could connect the two places, but they even sealed the paths which the elven spring water could flow to.”

“Isn’t that the equivalent of...”

“Exactly. The elves on the other side lost their source of mana supply henceforth. They couldn’t plant crops on the land, the weather became freezing, and it became impossible for them to return. After one winter, we were no longer harassed by elves from the North. We never heard any news from the elves, who were exiled North, ever again from then.”

Vyvyan sighed. She then smiled as if she was mocking herself. She said, “Son,

does that sound unbelievable to you? Mommy was, honestly, very shocked when Mommy first heard it, too, but it has already happened. Mommy can't change that. The North is doomed to be a cemetery for elves. Elves never knew what the North how the North is thereafter. Mommy doesn't know, either. If it wasn't for the trolls coming over, Mommy wouldn't even know that there was life there."

Elizabeth hugged me then looked at Vyvyan coldly and remarked, "You elves are seriously filthy."

"The last people I want to hear that from are you humans."

Vyvyan responded indifferently then looked at me with concern and carried on, "Son, the North is by no means a comfortable place. It's just a land of ice there. Also, for some reason, the land there is even colder than usual this year. It seems that the mana there has crumbled once again. Mommy doesn't know exactly what happened there, either. Son, you can establish your own land, but can you not choose the North? Mommy honestly can't provide you with anything if you're in the North of the large canyon. The elves have no means of withstanding the cold there."

"We can."

Mommy Elizabeth, who was next to me, suddenly spoke up. She solemnly said, "If that's my son's wish, Mommy can help you accomplish it. Mommy's army isn't used to fighting in snowy lands, but Mommy's soldiers at Socina City's garrison are all locals. They're residents of snowy lands; therefore, they've adapted to the snowy climate and are experts in combat in snowy lands. Alternatively, Mommy will send an envoy to Socina to help you form an army."

Vyvyan fired back without holding back at all, "You humans sure are lowly beings, so low that you can survive anywhere."

Elizabeth proudly responded, "That's why we're the rulers of the continent."

I nodded. I then looked at the two of them and responded, "I understand now. Thank you for the information you both have provided. I'm grateful for your assistance, as well, Mommy Elizabeth; but, I want to personally accomplish this, nevertheless."

Elizabeth froze up, and then looked at me, “Son, what do you want to do?”

“I want to personally go to Socina. I want to personally go there to gather information and find help. I’ve been under your protection for too long. I want land that belongs to me, which means that I must use my own strength to conquer the place.”

I looked at my two moms and solemnly said, “As such, I must complete this task alone. I must complete it on my own.”

## Ch. 16

“Nier, have some tea.”

Lucia courteously handed Nier a cup of tea. Nier vigilantly looked at Lucia and the cup of tea in her hand. She coldly asked, “What, are you trying to poison me?”

“No. What are you thinking? We’re both His Highness’ wives. I couldn’t possibly do such a thing.” Lucia gave an unprecedented response. She looked at Nier with a stiff smile, causing Nier to look at her even more vigilantly.

She pushed the cup of tea far away from her, “You wouldn’t give me a drink for no rhyme or reason. Whatever it is you want, come out forthright with it.”

“I want you to teach me how to make something...”

“What?”

“Food.”

Nier tilted her head. She looked at Lucia feeling completely befuddled and asked, “You need to be taught that? Aren’t people born with that skill?”

“... Did you know that you deserve a beating for saying that?”

“Not that you can beat me anyway.”

Nier then gently cleared her throat before saying, “Honestly, I’m not an expert myself. All the dishes I make aren’t dishes they’d serve in the palace or at a professional level. My cooking skills were acquired as a result of being forced to learn how to cook as part of the Valkyries. If it wasn’t for His Majesty liking my dishes, they wouldn’t have any hope of making it to the table. If you want to learn to cook, wouldn’t it be more appropriate for you to learn from Her Highness?”

“Her Highness has already returned. It appears she has important business.”

Lucia looked at Nier. She looked at Nier with puppy eyes, “Please, Nier, it’s my only request. I just want to be able to cook a decent meal for His Highness. His Highness hasn’t fully recovered. I want to cook a meal for once, too.”



Nier giggled, “All right. I’m a little tired from cooking the last few days myself. I don’t feel too good when I stand for too long now. I’ll teach you, then. But I can only teach you how to make humanity’s dishes. Is that all right with you?”

“No problem! I just want to make a soothing soup for His Highness.”

Lucia looked at Nier with excitement. The two of them stood up and walked to the kitchen. The chef inside the kitchen looked at the two Princesses oddly when they entered. Nier waved her hand and declared, “You can all leave for now. We’re going to use the kitchen for a bit. We won’t cut into your time for preparing lunch. Oh, right, if we do, leave His Majesty’s lunch to us.”

“Princess... are you feeling....”

“I know my body well. You don’t need to worry.”

Nier coldly looked at the chef next to her. The chef hesitated, and then everyone left the kitchen. Nier walked over to shut the door then looked at the ingredients in the cupboard. She made a suggestion, “Uhm, it looks as though there are still ingredients. Let’s make mushroom creamy cherry tomato soup today. This soup is very suited for His Majesty.”

“What was the soup you made for His Highness yesterday?”

“Oh, that was a remedial soup.” Nier picked up two things that were similar to branches, “This is the medicinal herb you elves gave me. It’s said to be support mana recovery. I used this and berries yesterday to make His Majesty a soup. I think it tasted decent.”

“His Highness said the soup yesterday was very tasty.”

“Really...?”

Nier shyly giggled. She then gently cleared her throat. Then, she picked up all of the ingredients and a block of cheese. The mushrooms here are weird. They’re akin to ginseng. She also grabbed some cherry tomatoes.

Lucia looked at the ingredients with amazement, and then asked, “We just have to chop them up?”

“Mm, you can say that. Handling ingredients is relatively simple after all... but...”

Before Nier could finish, Lucia grabbed a kitchen knife. She may no longer be a part of the shadow squad, but Lucia's skills with a knife were as sharp as ever. With a flash of light from the shiny blade, all of the ingredients on the chopping board were turned to pieces. Nier looked at the red juice from the cherry tomato running along the board with a dumbfounded expression...

"But, don't chop the cherry tomatoes, or else the juice will run dry."

Nier finished her sentence with an expressionless look. Lucia looked at the chopped up cherry tomatoes in front of her with a blank look, feeling at a lost for what to do...

Nier picked up a chopped up piece and ate it. She then said, "You chopped it up yourself, so you can deal with it yourself. It would be best to throw it away, but I reckon you won't learn to wait until people are done speaking before starting, unless I teach you a lesson. Do it again. Next step is to put it into the soup... Heat up the water in the pot first. Remember that the pot is very hot, so be careful not to burn yourself. Next, place the ingredients in orderly then place the lid on and turn the heat down. All you have to do next is wait."

=====

"Regardless, you were too hasty, Onii-sama."

I looked at Freya, who angrily frowned with her arms folded. I smiled helplessly as I replied, "I had no choice... It was my only choice at the time."

Freya frowned, "Even if that is the case, you used that method without discussing it with me beforehand. Had something happened to you, all of our preparations would have been for nothing."

"But luckily, Her Majesty and Her Highness will both support what we want to do."

"Yes, but, Onii-sama, do not do something so risky again. It was a gamble, but we need to gamble on more important matters. You might think that gambling with your life is no big deal, but the people around you value you, whether that is your mothers, your wives or me."

"Right, right, right."

“You always respond so nonchalantly!”

Freya sighed helplessly, and then said, “In any case, it is great that you are all right.”

Someone then gently pulled the door open. I turned my head to look and saw Lucia carry a tray in. Freya didn’t want to disturb us, so she stood up and bid me goodbye, “I shall take me leave, then, Onii-sama.”

The two of them passed by each other. Lucia walked up to my side all smiles and placed the tray down. My nose came to life. I smiled, “It smells really nice. Lucia, is this Nier’s new recipe?”

Lucia unhappily pouted and responded, “I personally made this, Your Highness! Am I just a useless person to you, Your Highness?”

“Really?”

“Okay... Nier did help... but she only helped a teeny bit. It was mainly me!”

Lucia stood next to me and brought the bowl over. She then nervously looked at my face. She trembled as she scooped up a spoon and carefully blew it. She then moved it to my mouth. Her green eyes contained nervousness and fear similarly to a rabbit. She took in a deep breath, “Please... please try some... Your Highness...”

I opened my mouth to touch my mouth to the warm liquid. The aroma burst in my mouth. Lucia nervously looked at me and asked, “How does it taste? Oop!!”

I suddenly pulled Lucia in and gave her a deep kiss. The prominent aroma of the soup spread in our mouths. Lucia froze for a moment before closing her eyes to return my kiss. She leaned back. Her face was now bright red. She looked at me cautiously then wiped the corner of her mouth. She softly said, “It feels... a little too sweet...”

I chuckled. I looked at her and asked, “Do you want another taste?”

“Mm... I wasn’t satisfied with just the last one... Let’s have another taste...”

## Ch. 17

The crisis this time was avoided, albeit me having to pay a somewhat big price. However, we got instant results from it. My two moms won't fight in my presence again, so we've avoided a war between the two races. I've almost finished what I needed to finish during my stay here, and therefore should plan for my next step; in other words, my journey to the North of the large canyon.

I'm more confident now after hearing Vyvyan's explanation for why the North of the large canyon was so desolate. She explained that it was due to the flow of the elven spring water being blocked off from reaching there. Put another way, as long as mana can be restored there, life will also be restored there. The part I can't wrap my head around is why the temperature there dropped again. If it's because of mana, the mana there dried up centuries ago.

*'Why would the temperature drop again this year?'*

*'It must be due to something on that side. It must involve elves since mana is involved. Otherwise, it must be another intelligent species. I'm very curious and very eager to meet with them. I have no way of communicating with trolls, and I don't want to be involved with unintelligent creatures. I'll just off them.'*

*'As for the details, I'll need to obtain information from Socina. Humans and elves haven't been there for centuries. If Socina doesn't have any information, either, I'll have to try exploring it. What I want most right now – which also happens to be what I need most now – is a map. Without one, I'll need to expend a lot of energy and time to explore the area.'*

*'I don't have that much time on my hands.'*

From my side, Freya worriedly suggested, "Onii-sama, you have just recovered. In my opinion, I think it would be best for you to rest for a few more days before planning your trip to Socina."

"I'm almost completely recovered. My only concern now is the full-moon night. I must return here on the full-moon night, so I need to make haste. If I don't, I might not make it to Socina City in time... Things are troublesome without Luna here..."

I must return quickly or I'll suffer immense pain on the full-moon night. I can't use magic on the full-moon night, and I'll need to resist the pain while controlling myself. I haven't suffered that pain in a long time. Without Luna here with me anymore, I must return for Vyvyan to suck my mana out for me.

After a moment of pondering, Freya asked, "Is Luna the only one who can do it? The other elves can do it, can they not?"

"If it was so simple, I wouldn't need Mom to help me every time. At the moment, there are only two people I know of whom can withstand my mana. One is my mom and the other is Luna. Others will suffer a pain worse than death if they absorbed my mana. As a matter of fact, their life may be in jeopardy."

"I see... I shall do my best to make your schedule as simple as possible, then, Onii-sama. If possible, tomorrow we, actually, no, you should leave the day after."

"Why the day after? Is something on tomorrow? Has my guard unit not reformed its ranks?"

I glanced at Gerald with a questioning gaze. He lingered for a moment before answering, "Based on what I can see, the guard unit has fully reformed its ranks, and the injured members have returned. Further, they are all training. If you need us to mobilise, we can mobilise at any time."

"Good."

"One more thing, Your Majesty. I would like to confirm something with you." Gerald looked at me and with an uncertain tone, asked, "Your Majesty, if you need to head out, shall I accompany you as your bodyguard, or shall I stay in the palace as Madam Freya's bodyguard?"

"Stay in the palace, of course."

"Go with Onii-sama, of course."

Freya and I answered at the simultaneously, causing the young man to be completely confused. He looked at us feeling dumbfounded. He looked back and forth between us with a flustered gaze. He stuttered, "Umm... umm... so what exactly shall I do? Your Majesty, can you give me a definitive command?"

“Onii-sama, I am staying in the palace. I will not be moving around carelessly. I have no use for this bodyguard, whereas you cannot be short one man, as you are outside. Onii-sama, for your safety’s sake, Gerald should go and guard you. I will be fine with the guards in the palace guarding me.”

Freya looked at me sincerely and continued, “Further, you are fond of putting yourself in danger. I think that having an extra guard will be an extra share of insurance.”

I looked at Freya and scrubbed her head roughly, “I have over a hundred guards with me. I don’t think that I’d recognise Gerald, even if he stood among them. I’m the one who can be with or without him; however, he’s a one-and-only bodyguard for you, so I can’t have him follow me. Freya, don’t go assuming that you’re safe here. Did you forget what happened to Luna? I thought the Royal Capital was the safest place in the world, but I lost one of the most important people to me. That’s why I won’t let that happen again, Freya. Whatever the case may be, Gerald is someone I relatively trust. I believe that he will protect you, even if it costs him his life.”

“That is right! Madam Freya, I would not hesitate to give my life for you!!”

“Okay, okay, okay, save the sweet talk for someone else to say. I’m not moved by what you say at all.”

Freya looked at Gerald emotionlessly, and then sighed. She then faced me and said, “But Onii-sama, there is, indeed, something for you to attend to tomorrow. Tomorrow is Troy City’s spring harvest festival. I hope that you can have fun with the Princess tomorrow, whether that is with Miss Nier or Miss Lucia. You did not relax with them when you came back this time. You need to head out again now. They may not have complained or anything, but I still think that you should have some fun with them before leaving.”

“Another festival?!!”

To be honest, I’m scared of festivals now. I lost Mera at the Deer Hunting Festival and nearly lost my own life, too. I lost Luna at the hunting season event and nearly lost my life again. I always get in trouble at every festival. It’s as if there’s always somebody out for my life at every festival. I only have a few of my loved ones and friends with me now. I don’t want to lose another one of

them and sure as anything don't want to deal with another similar turbulent situation again.

"It is all right. There will be no problems this time! I promise! This spring harvest festival is held within Troy City with the people holding it themselves and is intended to add a celebration to Troy City; hence, it will be fine. Nobody from outside will be participating this time. Everyone participating is a resident of Troy City while our guards are in charge of safety. In order to ensure our safety, I had a part in virtually every aspect of the festival. There will not be any problems this time, Onii-sama; I guarantee it. There will be no safety issues."

Freya looked at me nervously. As she spoke, she used hand gestures as though she was afraid that I would refuse.

I thought about it for a moment.

*'I'm not worried if it's just people from Troy City, because I'm highly respected here. Besides cancelling the people's ridiculous debts, I even provided them with work and crops to plant. Subsequently, they have no reason to harm me. Moreover, my guards are with me this time, so I don't think there will be any major incidents this time.'*

*'The last two times, my safety was in my moms' hands as I was in their cities. This time, however, Freya is in charge of my safety. I have no reason to suspect Freya. None at all.'*

I nodded, "All right, then. I shall have fun around tomorrow."

Freya seemed to let out a big sigh of relief when she saw me nod. She then looked at me again, but cheerfully this time. She exclaimed, "Please look forward to the celebration tomorrow, then, Onii-sama!"

## Ch. 18

"Troy City's festival, huh... Mommy must take part, then."

Mommy Elizabeth looked at me. From the bed, she turned onto her side, and then patted the spot next to her, which was a signal for me to come over...

*'I swear to the heavens I didn't go over to her because I could see the contour of her body through her sleeping gown. I swear I went over to her purely as her son!'*

I sat on the edge of mom's bed. Vyvyan supposedly returned to the elven lands as something came up, not to prepare materials. Meanwhile, Mommy Elizabeth chose to wait for me to return before returning to the Royal Capital, herself, and while she was at it, brought some Valkyries over to help guard the palace.

Nier, who was the current captain of the Valkyries, was present; therefore, the Valkyries here were not going to do what Alice did. In reality, there weren't many Valkyries who sided with Alice. The majority of them only followed the Empress's orders. That was the reason the Valkyries ordered to guard the outer court were willing to fight their captain to the death without any hesitation. The Empress and Nier were both here this time, so this group of Valkyries was absolutely loyal.

As such, I didn't worry about Nier and Lucia's safety.

Mom hugged me from behind. I could feel her weight from behind. Mom wrapped her slender white arms around my neck. Her faint scent enveloped my body. Mom must've just had a bath. Her black hair gave off a mellow scent. I could even feel the warmth of her chest.

"Mom... I actually wanted to invite you to this festival..."

I desperately tried to stop myself from focusing on the soft feeling on my back. We only had two thin layers of clothing between us. I felt an urge to turn around as I felt Mom's breaths and small tremors. However, I was not here to do that sort of thing this time. I'll leave once I'm done saying what I have to. I *will* leave once I'm done.

"Sure. Mommy will definitely take part. Mommy must participate in the first festival you're holding at your city, Son."

Mom bit my ear gently and giggled in a tender voice by my ear. She whispered, "It's so nice to be able to hug you, like this, Son... Mommy is honestly very scared. If you get angry, Mommy won't be able to hug you again. Mommy would suffer so much if that happened. Mommy has gotten used to



having you with Mommy. Mommy has gotten used to life with you. If you're no longer with Mommy, Mommy will have to live as Mommy did for the last ten years again. How would Mommy live that way...?"

"Mom... At the time I... mm... well... I was indeed angry. That's why I left without a word... In actuality... I should've spoken to you about it."

I felt Mom tighten her arms around me.

*'Please, please don't continue... You might not feel anything, but I can't take it... If you hug me any tighter, my hips are going to give in... I want to distract myself with something. Otherwise, I'll start hating myself again!!'*

*'I'll never have a boner in front of my mom again!'*

"Yeah. Mommy understands now. Mommy understood after you said that... Regardless of who it is around mommy, be it Castell, Alice, Nier or whoever, they're forever merely Mommy's vassal. You will forever be the only one who understands Mommy's thoughts..."

Mom gently brushed her face against mine. With a smile on her face and in a soft voice, she said, "Nobody has ever noticed mommy's suffering. The Royal Capital is a bird cage to Mommy. Mommy should've been in the outside world enjoying freedom; but instead, Mommy is on the throne carrying the expectations everybody has for Mommy. Mommy can only look at the iron bars Mommy, personally, built up. Everybody says that I'm the greatest woman in this world, but none of them realise that I'm also the loneliest woman in this world. There's nobody I can lean on in this cage. The only one who could provide me with warmth was the man in my arms, who will never return to me. Mommy still has you, though... You probably don't know how happy and how moved Mommy was when you said you would destroy this cage. At that moment, Mommy just wanted to give up everything and leave with you, just as Mommy eloped with your father back then..."

*'Hold up! Please wait a moment!'*

*'I can understand you being touched and your circumstance, but don't compare me with my father! Do you know how much that scares me, Mom?! I'm your son! If you say that I'm the same as your husband, it sounds disturbingly weird! Am I supposed to ask my father for forgiveness?!'*

*'I don't detect a miniscule chance of him forgiving me!'*

"Ah... Mom..."

"I finally get to see my son grow up. Mommy can understand the bliss of being a mother now... Mommy particularly understands it... There's nobody for Mommy to rely on, act wilful with or coquettish to anymore. Mommy has gotten used to living as an Empress. Mommy has gotten used to the determined mask behind the black veil, but when Mommy sees Mommy's son growing up, Mommy finally recognises how tired Mommy is..."

Mom sat straight up and clung to me from the back. I felt something heavy pressing down on my head. It also gave off a warm and dark sensation... Mom continued from overhead, "Son, you're becoming more and more like your father. No wonder why Vyvyan's love for you has never decreased ever since you were a kid. It's because you resemble our most beloved so much. Although my relationship with that woman is bad, I must admit that we share the same thinking... Come, turn around, Son."

I felt the weight and warmth leave my body. I then felt my heart beat speed up as well as the odd smell of sensuality in the air.

I turned my head around to see Mommy Elizabeth wearing a gentle smile that didn't suit her usual self at all. She was kneeling on my bed. I've only ever seen Mom's confident and proud look, or otherwise, her silly smile. Recently, I've seen her kind and consoled smile, as well. But this time, it was the first time that I saw her wear such a gentle and shy smile that made it seem as though she wasn't the Empress, but a young girl in love.

*'This smile must be the smile that belongs to my father...'*

"To be honest... Mommy was always slightly jealous to hear that you and Vyvyan kissed... You finally took the initiative to kiss Mommy last time... Mommy wants to kiss again..."

My entire body shuddered. I looked at Mom's peach-coloured lips that glistened under the light of the flame. Her lips were shiny as diamonds.

I quickly stood up and walked to the door with big strides. I then pulled the door open. Without turning my head around to look, I said, "Sorry... Mom. It's

late now. I'm going back to sleep... You should sleep soon, too. Goodnight..."

I quickly closed the door behind me then leaned on it. I took in deep breaths in order to calm my racing heart down.

*'That was seriously too scary, in every meaning of the word...'*

## Ch. 19

"Here, Onii-sama."

I looked at the mask Freya handed me. I hesitated for a moment before asking, "What's this?"

"A mask."

I know it's a mask. This mask can cover up your entire face, so you're basically going to have to identify people by their lips once they've worn it on... I looked at the mask in my hand that gave off a particularly wild vibe. I asked, "Don't you think this mask is really unsafe to wear?"

"It cannot be helped, Onii-sama. Her Majesty wished to participate; hence, we must wear masks. If she, alone, wore a mask, she would stand out. As such, we have to get everybody to wear a mask... But it is fine, Onii-sama. You must believe that you will be fine this time. I have already distributed the masks."

Freya proudly straightened up her posture. She then added, "Further, this can be considered a small present for you. You can go and see the Princesses in a bit."

"What did you do...?"

"Come on! Put the mask on, Your Majesty!"

Freya went up on her toes and forced the mask onto my head. She then took out another mask and wore it on for herself. Her mask resembled a bird.

Freya spun around before me in a lively manner, and then grabbed my hand to run outside. I felt that it was still early. It's only morning, after all. However, Nier was gone by the time I woke up.

*'It appears that they're all really looking forward to this festival.'*

Freya led me downstairs. There were two people in the large hall waiting for me already. I dawdled for a moment. The two individuals weren't strange per se, as they wore their masks normally, but...

*'Why are they wearing the exact same dress and mask?!'*

I looked at Freya's pleased look.

*'You want to confuse me as to who my wife is? Impossible. I've been in love with Lucia for over a decade, while I've had physical contact with Nier's body for two months. I can identify Nier just by physical contact. How could I possibly not identify them?'*

I reached my hand out and suddenly felt that the feeling wasn't right...

*'Based on this size... Hmm... it's off... She's not Lucia for sure, but... are Nier's this big?'*

I looked at the individual in front of me with suspicion. I gave a few squeezes then turned to look at Freya, but what I saw was her pale face...

"Your Majesty, what are you doing?"

I suddenly heard a voice from behind, so I spun around. I saw a familiar silhouette in the exact same robe. She had her head tilted as she looked at me.

*'That's Nier. This voice belongs to Nier... So who am I touching right now?! Who?!'*

"Umm... Your Highness..."

The person next to the small physique froze up and struggled to say, "I don't think you can do this despite the fact that we're mother and son..."

"WHAT?!"

I stepped back as if I got electrocuted, and consequently, tripped into Nier's embrace. I think I had a worse expression than Freya in that moment. I looked at the person I just grabbed with terror.

*'No wonder why the feeling was so unfamiliar. So it was... it was...'*

She finally couldn't hold it in.

All right, let me tell you it was.

Elizabeth removed her mask and laughed loudly. She didn't mind my rude behaviour just now. She laughed until she started tearing up. She panted and remarked, "This mask sure is incredible. Not even my son could tell it was me. Son, you thought I was Nier, didn't you?"

"I-I see..."

I looked at mom feeling incomparably awkward and said, "Sorry... Mom... umm... I really couldn't tell it was you..."

"It's all right. It's all right. Mommy doesn't mind. It was once your source of food, so Mommy doesn't mind it."

Mom laughed heartily then put her mask back on. I looked at the three women next to me, who looked the exact same. I then looked at Freya with a stupefied look. I smiled helplessly and asked, "Freya, what's this about?"

Freya looked at me and panicked as she exclaimed, "I swear to God that I did not get Her Majesty to dress that way."

"It really didn't have anything to do with her, Son. I, myself, wanted to do this."

Mom turned to look at me. With a smile she explained, "I think that it's a bit more fun for me to participate in this sort of celebration this way. Mommy isn't the Empress here. Here, Mommy is just an ordinary woman, so mommy has no need to be different to Nier. I can freely have fun now."

"Ah... I see how it is..."

"What? I think it's very becoming of me."

Mom looked down at herself feeling a little uneasy. Alas, she couldn't see too clearly because of her mask. Honestly, there was nothing wrong with her. This is the white dress with gold edges that Nier likes. Nier and Lucia are both still very young; therefore, this sort of clothing suits them. As for Mom... Mom looks really young, too. Hence, there was no major problem, except it didn't suit mom's expression too much. After all, faint colours in spring on sunny days didn't go with Mom's proud nature too much. That issue was overcome with

the mask, though.

Freya gave a deep bow then smiled, “I hope you all have fun, then. You can go for a stroll now. The climax is in the evening. I hope that you can all enjoy it.”

I looked at Freya and asked, “Aren’t you comin?”

“Ah, I will be going. It is just that there are still some minor matters to settle in the palace. I will be there soon. When the time comes, if you could recognise me, I would be very happy, Onii-sama.”

Freya winked slyly, and I smiled, but didn’t say anything. My wives suddenly rushed at me from two sides, with one occupying a side each. They snatched up my arms before my Mom could and dragged me away by force.

=====

A few minutes later at His Majesty’s bedroom.

“Madam Freya!”

When she saw the maid, Freya said, “I came to grab some stuff for Onii-sama.”

The maid nodded then bowed and left. No outsiders were allowed into His Majesty’s room. They were not even allowed to peek inside. The maid, therefore, had to leave when Freya entered. Freya pulled the door open and entered.

His wife is meant to tidy the room, but Nier went straight off to get her makeup done this time; thus, she hadn’t tidied up. His Majesty had just subconsciously tidied up the bed a little.

Freya walked up to the side of the bed. She felt that she could still detect her Onii-sama’s warmth. She checked around her. After confirming that there was nobody around, she snatched up her Onii-sama’s pillow and buried her head in it then began taking in big breaths.

“Aaahh!! Onii-sama’s scent... Onii-sama’s scent... Onii-sama’s warmth... It’s the same as being hugged by Onii-sama... When will you hug me again, Onii-sama...? I want to sleep with Onii-sama again so much!”

Freya rolled around on the bed as if she was insane. This was a very rare

opportunity for her. She was the only one in the palace. Lucia wasn't around, and neither was Nier. She had been waiting for this opportunity for a long time. She sniffed the scent he left behind on his pillow with all her might and rolled around on his bed with a bright smile.

“One more breath... one more breath, and then I'll go find Onii-sama... I'll lie here for just a while longer...”

Freya buried her head in his blanket she had just tidied up and took in deep breaths...

“Madam Freya?! What are you doing?!”

The air froze in an instant...

Not just for Freya. who was inside alone, but also Gerald...

“You can't peek into Onii-sama's room! What are you doing here?! Get out! Get out!! I'm going to kill you!! I'm going to kill you!!!!!!”

## Ch. 20

I once attended a spring harvest festival at Luna's hometown, but that was more of a trap than it was a festival. This time, however, things were just absolutely wild.

This was also the first business opportunity for all of the merchants who came to this city, so all of the food vendors brought out their best skills. It was a carnival in the plaza of the city at night, which is also situated in the centre of the city behind the palace. The main area for vendors was a wide street that extended from the city doors to the plaza. This street is the biggest street. Eight double-horse carriages could get through here. Small sheds were temporarily set up on both sides of the street for the vendors.

Maybe spring came early for the merchants. Despite spring having just come in, the merchants had a wide range of delicacies available only during summer at their stalls. The people couldn't resist the dishes after getting sick of winter delicacies. The more expensive foods included fish, while the cheap ones were

little snacks or chestnut-like foods. However, the “chestnuts” in this world don’t have the same content inside; instead, they contain a warm milk-like liquid. Such a food was a rare delicacy during these cold and windy days.

I don’t know what it was myself, but I bought a cup each for the three women next to me.

I chose a sour drink. It seems like it’s this world’s lemons. The drink was carbonated, so I found the taste of cola from it. Unfortunately I was wrong... I did find the taste of lemon juice.

*‘It appears that people here share the same taste.’*

There were people crowded all around. We stuck together closely as we went around to avoid getting separated. I don’t know if Lucia and Nier had discussed it among themselves already or not, but the two of them clung to my arms every step of the way, never letting go. That made it impossible for Mom to stand next to me, as well. As a result, Mom had no choice but to grab onto my cloak. She looked at little pitiable. But even if I couldn’t take it, I had no way of getting Lucia and Nier to let go. *They* are my wives, after all.

Everybody around wore masks, as well. It truly resembled a carnival. Lucia and Nier were very joyous, which meant that their appetites were at their pinnacles, too. We ate from the start of the street to the end of the street, and then ate from the stalls on the other side... I had to buy three or more serves every time.

Mom was actually more excited than my two wives, but she was evidently very shy. She wouldn’t directly say what she wanted. Instead, she’d tug on me then look at a stall with a gaze of eagerness. I would then understand what she meant and would buy it for her. The four of us noticed a vendor when we got to a stall. The vendor froze up. There’s no way he’d know who my wife was.

*‘Come on, guess. Your chances of getting it right are higher than the likelihood of guessing wrong, though. You have a two in three chance. The remaining third is my mom...’*

We walked and walked until we came to a place where people were gathered. We stopped there. Lucia tried to look at the centre of the crowd with curiosity; alas, she couldn’t get through with her small stature. I went and carried her up,



letting her sit on my arm as if she was a kid. I soon regretted it, though...

*'I don't have the arm strength or physical strength to act tough.'*

"Your Highness, it seems that it's divination."

Lucia dexterously hopped off my arm and watched me massage my arm. She said, "An elf is doing divinations. It seems that he can see something..."

I lost interest, because I've seen an elf that can truly see into the future. Her name is Vyvyan. I bet this one is a conman. They all say they can see something; nevertheless, in the end, all they do is use their talking skills to impress you.

"Let's try it, Your Majesty. Let's see if he is a liar or not."

"Is there any need to try? He's guaranteed to be a liar. I have an elf that can see the future by my side. How could there be a second?"

"Your Highness, we're here to have fun after all, so let's give it a go."

Lucia, however, seemed very keen. Nier, too, indicated that she was interested. I turned around to Mom, who was behind me. Elizabeth chuckled, "There's nothing to lose if we try it. How about this, Son? Let's go over together and see if he can tell who your wife is. If he can perform divinations, he should be able to identify your wife, right? Plus, he would be able to tell you have two wives."

"Let's give it a go, then."

Since everybody was keen, I agreed to it. I walked over with the three of them and came before him. I then lingered.

Normally, whatever species I see here is normal. You can't tell humans and elves apart, other than from their ears.

*'I could understand the diviner before me having a white beard, and I can accept a tilted and torn triangular hat as well, but why do his hands resemble that of a lamb's hooves?!'*

*'What is he, a lambman? Lucia, can you not see that?! His got the hooves of lamb for hands!!'*

I hesitated while standing in front of him. He broke his silence. He looked at

me with his heterochromia eyes. He then looked at the three behind me. He took in a deep breath. In a murky voice, he asked, "Young man, is there something you would like to know?"

"Umm..." His voice made me feel a little guilty, but I reminded myself that he was just a conman.

*'He must be a conman.'*

I looked at him and in a ridiculing tone asked, "I want to know who among these three is my wife."

He shifted around then looked up. He looked at me with his hazy eyes. I looked at him as I awaited his reply. After a moment, he gently cleared his throat to break our silence. He looked at me and replied, "I only know that which you do not know. As for what you already know, why would you need to ask me?"

*'See? He's a liar. He can't tell, so now he's playing word games.'*

The crowd behind me burst into laughter, and then left after having their curiosity satisfied. The people didn't crowd around for their future or something, but solely for the fun. People need entertainment or else their lives would be too boring. I smiled with satisfaction. I turned around to leave. The strange man didn't mind that the people around had left. He didn't stop acting the way he had been acting. He, instead, continued looking at me and spoke in a voice that appeared as though only the two of us could hear, "Your Majesty, you need not be anxious, for I know that you will not come to me merely to ask about the future, but will also share with me what you know."

I paid him no heed as I led my mom and wives away.

*'He's a conman from the pugilistic world. I told you. Other than my Mommy Vyvyan, who can see the future with her mind reading skills, there's nobody else who can see the future. That applies whether it's a human or whatever race they are. They're liars.'*

"I told you he was a liar. And he even said some arrogant rubbish about 'Your Majestyyy, you will definitely seek me ooouutt...'"

I conceitedly mocked him while the three next to me listened to me. Elizabeth

then suddenly interjected. She looked at me with a very surprised expression. I paused and asked, “Do I have something on my face?”

“No... Son, I suddenly realised that you never mentioned you were the Prince. Plus, your face was hidden by our mask, while you’re wearing clothes that doesn’t symbolise that you’re from the royal family... So, how did he know that you were the Prince?”

A cat suddenly caught my tongue...

## Ch. 21

People danced wildly at night.

It was time for the fireworks Freya spoke of.

The fireworks of this era aren’t as spectacular as the modern day fireworks, but they still create the same atmosphere, nonetheless. After all, it’s a rare sight for people of this era.

Like with the elves, you need to burn up a rattan object, except that the rattan isn’t the shape of a person, but an object similar to the shape of a pig, which was similar to the object used in the world I came from. The ash is then collected. This is basically one of the most ancient types of fertilisers, I suppose.

At sunset, the crowd went toward the plaza where the fireworks were to be set off. You could see them clearer if you were closer to the plaza. Once the fireworks ended, they’d burn a rattan pig. I think that the rattan pig could burn for an entire night, which is also the wildest night. Everybody can dance around it or return to the streets to enjoy all the delicacies.

*‘It doesn’t look as though anybody will be sleeping tonight.’*

What made me really happy was that nothing suspicious happened at this festival this time. It’s my city, all right. It’s safe here. But I have to give credit to the hourly patrols as well as the undercover guards scattered around among the crowds. The event can remain safe thanks to their efforts.

The plaza is actually massive. My original wish was to have army lined up here

at this plaza as I roll called them. That's why the plaza was constructed to be large. However, virtually everyone rushed here this time for the event. Moreover, since the large rattan pig was placed there during the fireworks, it ended up being quite squishy.

"Be careful. Don't let go of my hand. If you want to go somewhere, be sure to tell me; else, it'll be difficult to meet up again if we get separated. If you can't find me, return to the palace, first. I'll head back if I can't find you. Pay attention to your safety. It's dangerous with so many people here."

I looked left and right at my wives hugging me. The two of them nodded. I then looked back at Mom, who was grabbing on to my cape. I placed one arm behind me, "Mom, take my hand. Don't ever let go. If you let go, it'll be hard to find you."

"Even if we do get separated, you will come find me, won't you?"

Mom took my hand with a smile. I looked at her smile and responded, "Of course, I'll find you for sure no matter who lets go."

"Mommy is reassured, then. Mommy feels very safe since you're here, after all."

Mom gently leaned her head forward, thereby touching her forehead with mine. I smiled while looking at each other as if we acknowledged each other in our hearts. I've never seen the fireworks with my wives before, as we don't get the chance to see them too often. Nonetheless, I've seen them with Mommy Elizabeth before. That time we watched the fireworks was on mom's birthday in the Royal Capital. We had the same identity back then. I snuck out with Mommy Elizabeth that time and the two of us had fun for the entire day. There was nobody else with us that day. We strolled around with just the two of us. I watched Mom eat, buy jewellery and get upset over the horse she bet on losing similarly to a little girl. That was such a beautiful memory.

It can be considered my little secret with Mom. I never told anybody about that day, and I don't think Mom did, either. Mom always wore the hair accessory I bought her that day thereafter. Though the lady in waiting does Mom's hair, she still put the piece holding our memory on.

The crowd suddenly exclaimed. Perhaps the fireworks were about to begin.

The crowd shuffled forward. We weren't ready. We were, consequently, bumped aside. I turned my head with panic and spotted Lucia desperately leaning over to grab my arm again. The other two desperately squeezed in by bumping away people around. One grabbed my arm again while the other grabbed my cape.

The guard unit stopped. It was a false alarm. It was a false alarm.

I let out a sigh of relief and looked at the three around me. I remarked, "It really is dangerous, huh?"

"It is, Your Highness, humans are scary. I can't believe there are so many of them..."

Lucia sounded genuinely scared, for you wouldn't see such a shocking scene in the elven lands. This was Lucia's first experience in such a large crowd. She grabbed my arm tighter; she was afraid that she would be separated a second time. The other two clung closer to me, thereby locking me down in the centre.

*'Is it going to be a problem to have two pregnant women push others and get pushed around this way?'*

**Boom!!**

Before I could consider the question, the fireworks went off overhead. They were different to what I expected. I remember they were just ordinary fireworks, yet they had suddenly become fireworks with colours and shapes as though chemistry advanced to the modern level in the blink of an eye. I looked at the five or six colours of fireworks in the sky that gave me a nostalgic feeling about life.

It was as though I returned to the time where I'd be on my sofa playing with my phone on New Year while my parents were in the kitchen making dumplings. On TV would be New Year celebrations that, unfortunately, nobody watched. Outside the window would be colourful fireworks in the sky.

I could seemingly smell the aroma of dumplings again and hear my parents whispering in the kitchen...

I've been here in this world for a few months now and have virtually completely become Troy. I, in fact, forgot my name was Zhu Liangzhe and was

actually a visitor who came via dimensional travel.

*'Since when was it that I began to see myself as Troy?'*

*'I suddenly miss home slightly now...'*

"How beautiful..."

A voice came from my side, and I turned to face in its direction. I saw a beautiful face underneath the mask and chuckled softly before wrapping my hand around my wife's waist. She must be Nier. Lucia looked at me blankly from the other side. Nier turned to face me. Her eyes trembled gently underneath her mask.

"I think that you're very beautiful, too."

*'I have family here, too.'*

*'Perhaps it's because I have family and loved ones here now that I consider this bliss belongs to me. Zhu Liangzhe is dead already. Reminisce as I may, I can't return there anymore.'*

*'To the contrary, I want to continue living with my family here.'*

Nier giggled in a soft voice, and then leaned in and gave me a light kiss on my lips. I savoured Nier's soft lips. Nier's tongue and mine were wrapped around each other as though they were locked in a tight embrace.

When the fireworks went off overhead as if it was rendering our love overhead with colours, Nier looked at me and softly said, "I love you..."

I hugged her tightly and firmly responded, "I love you, too."

"Uhm..."

She gave a gentle nod then came closer to me. We looked up to see the colourful fireworks overhead. Next to us was the person we loved, as well.

*'What should I worry about all that stuff about life for when I have the company of a beauty?'*

Everybody started to scatter after the fireworks ended. Nier then looked at me with excitement and exclaimed, "Your Majesty! Your Majesty! It was so pretty!!"

“Yeah... but, you didn’t really watch it, did you...?”

*‘We were kissing half the time.’*

Nier exclaimed with displeasure, “What are you talking about?! I watched the entire thing!”

“Wh-...”

I was stunned...

*‘Lucia is definitely on my right hand side. I couldn’t possibly mistake her small stature...’*

*‘So...’*

*‘The one I confessed my feelings to and the one I kissed with was...’*

*‘Was... was...’*

*‘AAAAHHHH!!!!!!’*

## Ch. 22

“Madam Freya... It was my mistake... I should not have peeked into His Majesty’s bedroom... so, can you please come out and eat something...?”

“Stay away from me!”

Freya shouted from inside the room. She appeared to be just as angry after an entire day had gone by. She hadn’t left her room once all day and not eaten anything. Freya buried her head underneath her pillow while the sense of shame made her want to rage.

It was the first time she did that, yet to her surprise, her bodyguard discovered her doing it... She hugged her brother’s pillow and sniffed it...

*‘Isn’t that just creepy...? Why...? Why...? Why did the moron have to catch me in the act? Even if the moron wouldn’t say anything, it was so shameful!’*

Gerald let out a heavy sigh then placed the tray on the ground. He scratched his head

“Is it not reasonable... for a sister to like her brother...?”

“What do you know?!!”

“You are family, after all! Is it not normal for a sister to like her brother...? I will not spread it, either... nor will I feel that you are childish or anything...”

Freya sat up from her bed and scrubbed her hair in a frustrated manner. She then hopped off her bed and went to pull the door open. She looked at Gerald’s face and let out a sigh. She then exclaimed, “Do not tell anybody about it, especially Onii-sama. If word of this gets out, I swear, I will kill you, and then kill myself!”

It looked as though being wilful was pointless with the block of wood. If Freya didn’t explain it properly, he would probably tell her brother.

Gerald looked at Freya with astonishment, and then awkwardly scratched his head as he responded, “There is no need to do that, is there...? His Majesty would not say anything, even if he did find out... He is your brother, after all...”

“You can’t tell him!! You absolutely cannot tell anyone about this!!”

Freya’s serious expression frightened Gerald. Freya grabbed Gerald’s chest violently then looked at him and in a vicious tone warned, “All right, let me just be upfront with you. I like Onii-sama! Not the sister brother type of like! I like Onii-sama! How could I not fall for him after being by his side for so long?!! So you can’t tell Onii-sama about this! The Princesses is very sensitive about this sort of stuff! If they found out, I won’t be able to stay by Onii-sama’s side anymore! If you tell Onii-sama and he makes me leave, I won’t have anything to live for anymore! If that happens, I will make sure I kill you before killing myself!”

“I-Is it that serious?!”

Gerald looked at Freya with shock. Freya’s eyes started to brim with tears. She tightly gripped Gerald’s chest with her small hands. The young girl mustered up so much courage to tell him about the love that she couldn’t let anyone know of. Gerald looked at the young girl, who was crying, with a blank look. He hesitated for a moment before gently pressing his hand on Freya’s head.



“I understand now, Madam Freya. I understand your situation now.”

Gerald exchanged eye contact with her, and then earnestly went on, “I will protect your love. As your bodyguard, protecting your love is one of my duties. As long as I am by your side, I will definitely protect your love!”

Freya looked at him and hesitated for a moment before revealing a smile. She hammer fisted Gerald hard on his chest then softly said, “Is that right...? That’s the first time you’ve said something so nice after crossing me so many times...”

=====

Mom’s expression looked very normal on the way back. She seemed as though everything that happened was a dream. In reality, nothing happened. I scanned the side of mom’s face, but didn’t know what to say.

What, am I supposed to go up to her and ask, “Hey, Mom, did you just kiss with me...?”

*‘How could I ask that?!’*

*‘Furthermore, the situation was very chaotic back there, so not even I know who I kissed. I don’t know if it was Elizabeth or Nier that I kissed... I have no idea who it was... but.... but... but based on what Nier said in response, it sounds as though the one I kissed was Mommy Elizabeth!’*

*‘What did that “I love you” prove...? No, no, no, that’s not what’s happening. I’m confident it’s not! Mom stills misses Inard. She’s always thinking of him, so there’s no way she would’ve said that to me. It’s got to be her motherly love for her son. Yeah, I’m certain of that!’*

*‘Uhm, I’m sure of it... That must be it...’*

They removed their masks, and I paused to look at Mom’s cheek for a while. She noticed my gaze, so she looked back at me with her head titled and a smile, “What’s wrong, Son? Is there something on Mommy’s face?”

“No...”

I shook my head. I dawdled as I looked at Mom’s ample and glossy lips under the light.

*‘Did I kiss her lips just now...?’*

I looked at Mom and hesitated for a bit before saying, “I wanted to know if you had fun today, Mom.”

She paused for a bit. Maybe she was pondering the question. The corner of her mouth then crept up into a weird smile that carried the vibe of her teasing me. She touched her lips and with a smile, replied, “Of course I was happy. I got to have fun with my son, after all. Plus, I also got to taste something very nice.”

“Yeah! Yeah!” Lucia nodded with excitement, “I must admit that humanity has some really nice food. I never thought that berries could be used that way. It was, indeed, very tasty.”

“Yeah. The fireworks at the end were very pretty, too. That was my first time seeing such bright fireworks.”

*‘By the sounds of it, Nier can’t forget the fireworks.’*

I thought they were really nice, too. I don’t know how Freya accomplished that. I’m guessing that she used the elves’ magic. Otherwise, humans couldn’t have made such a big leap in their technology on their own... However, my attention wasn’t focused on the fireworks, because at the time I was...

Lucia nodded affirmatively in agreement and responded, “The fireworks were, indeed, so pretty! I watched the fireworks in the sky the entire time and didn’t focus on my surroundings, causing me to almost let go of you.”

Elizabeth giggled as she looked at the two of them. She shook her head and with a smile, said, “Really? Were they that pretty...? How unfortunate. I did something else not long after they started, so... I missed the ending.”

Nier looked at mom with curiosity and asked, “What were you doing at the time, Your Majesty?”

Mom looked at me, who was pale as a sheet. She giggled as if she was pulling a prank, “Obviously it was... mm... something that made me even happier than watching fireworks!”

## Ch. 23

All of my luggage as well as all other matters had been prepared. My next step was to head to Socina City.

I couldn't look Elizabeth straight in the face after the festival. Elizabeth was well aware of my distress, though, so she didn't mention it once. To be honest, I couldn't come to grips with the fact that I confessed to my mother. I honestly didn't know that it was Elizabeth. Elizabeth's mouth felt and tasted the exact same as Nier's, and her lips were just as soft. I couldn't tell at all.

Luckily, my wives didn't know or pay attention to it.

*'I need something to distract myself with right now, so that I can stop thinking about it.'*

*'But I must say... Mom's lips are really soft... They're as impressive as Nier's and Lucia's. No wonder why I was so passionate when we kissed.'*

Freya came into my bedroom and made a small bow, "Onii-sama, you can set out tomorrow. Everything is prepared and the guards are ready, as well."

I looked at Freya and replied, "All right, got it. Thank you, Freya. But, I didn't see you at the festival last night. Did you not come?"

Freya looked at me in an odd way and pouted, "Ah, no... I did go. I cannot believe you dare mention that. I cannot believe you did not recognise me!"

"Ah, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. There were too many people, so I didn't see you. But I swear, I earnestly searched for you. It's just that I didn't end up finding you. It absolutely wasn't because I didn't search!"

"Hmm... I shall trust you, then, Onii-sama." Freya chuckled, and then continued, "The fireworks I asked the elves to create this time were not bad, were they? They were able to add shapes and colours to it as you saw."

"Indeed, they were very nice."

I nodded then walked up to Freya. I rubbed her small head and went on, "Freya, you and Her Majesty will be the only ones in the palace when I head to Socina this time. Her Majesty is not good at taking care of people. Therefore, I'll need to rely on you to look after Nier and Lucia. Luna is no longer here, so there are no personal servants in the room. As such, I'll have to bother you."

Freya nodded. She then proudly responded, “That is fine. Leave it to me, Onii-sama! There will be no problems, for I have taken care of them for a long time already! The Princesses bellies are starting to protrude now. I will soon be able to see your child, right?! I am looking forward to it! You and the Princess are both so good looking; therefore, your child must be very cute, too.”

I laughed then firmly rubbed her head. I said, “It’s still too soon to say that. Nevertheless, after my child is born, I won’t be running around outside so much anymore. How do I put it? I feel as though I’m running out of time.”

“You need not worry, Onii-sama! My responsibility is to be responsible for your safety and your career. It is fine if you need to look after your family, as I am your sister!”

“Your failure of a brother is always bothering you.”

“That allows me to stay by your side without worry.”

Freya hugged me with a smile, and then looked up at me. With a smile she said, “Onii-sama, depend on me. Depend on me, Onii-sama. That way, I can think that you need me, and consequently let me continue to stay by your side... because... I do not have any right to, otherwise...”

“You do and will always have the right, because you are my sister, my most beloved sister.”

I cut Freya off as I pulled her into my tight embrace. She shuddered, and then hesitantly wrapped her arms around my waist. I didn’t resist her. Freya hugged me with reassurance. She smiled as she leaned into my chest and tightened her arms. She softly said, “Uhm... I know. I know...Thank you... brother... You, too, are my... most beloved brother...”

=====

“So, what exactly happened?! Why did I receive an emergency about an attack while I was at Troy City?! It was just a pack of trolls, and yet you dared to call me back?! Didn’t I give you the authority to deal with them?! You called me back from my son’s side just because of a single attack?!”

Vyvyan aggressively hurled the cup in her hand toward the elders. She sat in her throne feeling frustrated, as she looked at the elders trembling below. The

elders exchanged glances with each other. One of them then fearfully spoke up, “Your Highness... we are very sorry... it is just that the attacking force was honestly too big. Both of our armies were attacked... Based on their numbers, they were more than all of the hordes that attacked in winter combined...”

“That’s bound to happen in spring. Isn’t this an annual occurrence now?”

Vyvyan tugged her blonde hair with irritation. She bit down on her lip and exclaimed, “Just let the vanguard armies handle it. Are you telling me that you want me to personally head up North? I don’t know what the situation is when I’m in the Imperial Capital. If I hastily give commands, it will only affect our frontlines’ judgement!”

“No... that is not what I mean... Your Highness... it is just... just... the horde this time was too large. It was far larger than previous hordes. We were worried that, perhaps, the Northern tribes wanted to attack us, and hence, we called you back.”

Vyvyan lingered for a moment, and then sat up straight. She looked at the elders below while contemplating to herself in silence for a long time.

“Umm... Your Highness... We feel that it is somewhat dangerous. Based on the magnitude and frequency of their attacks, two armies alone are not enough to handle them... If this is a scouting mission before their actual attack, we will be at too much risk. Your army is still stationed at humanity’s border right now. Thus we called for you to come back and personally assume command...”

Vyvyan nodded. She stood up, “You’re right. I apologise for my irritation at the start. We should, indeed, take heed here. I shall now order the army in the South to return to the North. Additionally, I shall have all armies in battle status. This attack was a little dangerous, so I shall personally prepare to do battle at any time as w(ell)-...”

Vyvyan suddenly stopped, thereby leaving her sentence unfinished. She quickly pressed her hand onto her belly, and then took back what she said. She wore a complex expression. After a short pause, she sighed, “I shall stay inside the Imperial Capital. I have not been feeling well recently, so I cannot move about carelessly. Also, have the paths that lead here been sealed off?”

The elders responded with awkwardness, “Yes, they have. However, we can

only guarantee that we elves will not be attacked. As for humanity... We are unable to help there.”

“Ah... I’m aware of that. I’ll go and see Elizabeth about that.”

Vyvyan nodded before continuing, “Remember, do not slack with regards to this. We must ensure that our armies are ready to go to battle at all times. I think that if they want more than simply just food, then they might be after our spring water. We cannot lose our elven spring no matter what! We must not lose it!”

“Understood!”

## Ch. 24

Spring has walked in on the continent...

That was how it was supposed to go.

Troy City, which was situated northward, had entered its spring harvesting season, as well, which meant that spring was upon the entire continent. Socina, however, was still showing signs of winter. The closer I got to Socina, the more it felt as if I was heading to the past, as in I was returning to winter – which I had already gone through.

To be fair, it’s not correct for me to say that the situation here is similar to returning to winter, but rather that this place is in this state this all year round. Even if the sun was out, you wouldn’t feel a ray of warmth here. You’ll see bright snowflakes that come from mountains from far away.

The people wore thick hats and wrapped themselves up with their fur clothing as they swiftly walked through the streets with their heads down. It would be better to describe Socina City as an area as large as one section of the Imperial Capital as opposed to calling it a city. I looked at the city ahead of me while sitting atop my horse. There was already a cavalry escort waiting at the entrance of the city.

*‘It appears to be the team here to meet us.’*

Philes pat me on my shoulder, “Let us go, Your Majesty.”

I touched the furry collar next to me and replied, “Uhm... However, it looks as though Socina’s cold climate isn’t just your average cold climate.”

“Yes. Your Majesty, we should make our winter uniforms thicker when we return... It is really cold here in these clothes.”

“There’s no need for that. It’s not that I don’t want to make you new clothes, but that there’s no need for such clothing at Troy City. Since we’re here at Socina, you guys should go and buy some clothes.”

I touched Philes face that was slightly red from the cold...

*‘Wow... his face is so smooth...’*

“Your Majesty...”

Philes shyly looked at me. That’s when I realised that I had been touching him for a long time... Philes looked at me very shyly. He looked at me with his wet eyelashes, which gave the impression that he wanted to back off, but didn’t dare to. That gave me an odd sense of conquest. I looked at Philes and seriously wanted to pounce him...

*‘Shit! Shit! What the hell?! He’s a guy! He’s a guy! He’s a guy! How did I have such a terrifying thought?!’*

*‘Philes is too scary from every perspective.’*

I gently cleared my throat then pulled my hand back. I looked at Socina.

*‘I need to see a pretty woman right now or I’m going to err in life. The one closest to me right now is Karana.’*

*‘Hey Karana, let me check you out!’*

Speaking of Karana, she nearly became my wife. If she didn’t resist at the time, I might not have confessed to Nier. If I got together with Karana, Nier wouldn’t have gone to the church, and she wouldn’t have confessed to me for sure. If that all happened, Nier would just be my bodyguard right now.

*‘Should I be thankful to Karana, or should I be feeling it’s a bit of a pity?’*

We continued moving along together. I was relieved to see my guards behind

me. I must say that this trip through the snow and passing through the mountains was not pretty. My men were very eager to relax once they got to the city. We had the flag representing the royal family erected. The flag blew in the wind alongside the snowy mountains and blue sky. The cavalry escort noticed us, and therefore approached us.

Karana, who rode at the forefront, waited for me. She then smiled and dismounted to salute me, "Welcome to Socina, Your Majesty."

I responded with a smile, "Thank you for your invitation, Karana. I will have to trouble you for the next few days. However, we have no need to speak out here anymore. My guards can't stand the weather here. If possible, please allow us to enter the city, first. We can continue our talk once we're inside."

"All right."

Karana nodded, but didn't say anything after. She immediately had the escort make way. Karana and I trotted on our horses at the front with my guards in the centre while their cavalry escort formed their ranks at our rear. Their escort wasn't armed, but my guards all had their hands on their sword handles. After all, with us surrounded at the centre, we were in a very vulnerable position.

"Socina is a small city, but it is the only city in these snowy mountains. I shall do my best to make you feel as comfortable as possible. But nonetheless, you should not compare us to the standard in the Royal Capital."

"That's all right. I didn't come here as a tourist this time. Moreover, I'm not someone who craves enjoyment. I think that you already know that after seeing me in the desert."

Karana pursed her lips into a smile before responding, "That is right. Seeing you in a hellish place such as the desert proves that you are most definitely not somebody who craves enjoyment nor are you a good-for-nothing Crown Prince. That is precisely why I had the courage to invite you here. However, since you said that you are not here as a tourist, does that mean that you have other business? May I know what it is?"

I didn't answer her directly. Instead, I replied, "It's nothing we need to discuss urgently. I'll explain it to you once we're inside the city."



“I shall shut down my curiosity for the meantime, then. I believe that it is nothing detrimental for Socina City.”

Karana nodded. She knew not to ask me anymore. She had the sensibility to not question me further. I looked at her with a smile, “I haven’t told you what it is, yet. Aren’t you worried that I’d betray Socina?”

“I believe that you will not betray us.”

Karana’s expression didn’t change. She maintained her polite and eloquent smile as she looked at me. Her amethyst eyes were touching and bright. She kept her smile as she said, “Although I have not known you for long, I trust you in a way that is hard to describe. I think it is your eyes. Your eyes are clear as the ice at the peak of the mountains, and I, therefore, trust you.”

“Yeah...? I’ve never had anyone compliment my eyes before.”

I chuckled. I looked at Karana’s amethyst eyes. She was looking back at me, too. Karana truly is a beautiful woman. She’s akin to a lotus in a pond, born with a graceful and composed beauty, which was totally different to Nier and Lucia.

The two of us had been looking at each other for a long time. We both suddenly looked away. Karana giggled in a somewhat shy, yet awkwardly fashion. She lowered her head and looked at her horse. Meanwhile, I chuckled dryly and looked ahead.

It felt as though the cold air was now hot on my face.

*‘What’s wrong with me? I’m a married man, and I’ve even got kids, yet I’m acting the same way a young boy would when he falls in love for the first time. It was just eye contact.’*

*‘Maybe it’s because she’s Karana?’*

*‘Stop, stop, stop. My wives and kids are still waiting for me at home! I must control myself! I can’t bring back another, not to mention that she’s a widow, too!’*

## Ch. 25

Socina City is a very simple and unsophisticated city. Although it's situated in snowy lands, there were no signs that snow was collected on the streets. Perhaps that was due to strict regulations in the city to ensure tidy and unobstructed paths. As we travelled along the street, the people gathered up on the two sides of the streets and shouted something. I, admittedly, don't quite understand the dialect here.

"The people are welcoming you, Your Majesty."

"They are? I'm very grateful for the warm welcome, then."

Karana laughed. She then looked at me and said, "You can, actually, rightfully accept their welcomes, for you contributed a lot toward their livelihood. Were it not for your rationality and courage, I would not have been able to fulfil my promise to them."

I lingered for a moment. I then smiled helplessly and responded, "I'm in a real dilemma now. Shall I consider that your praise, or shall I consider it your ridicule for me, who was the loser?"

"Of course I am not ridiculing you. Your Majesty, I never thought that I defeated you that time. I believe that there would have been nothing that I could do if you destroyed it at the time. You gave me the map after rational thinking and out of generosity. I have always been very grateful for your help." Karana looked at me as if she was offended and continued, "I consider you my friend, Your Majesty. Could it have been that you have always thought of me in that light?"

I shook my head with a smile and replied, "No. It's as you said. I always considered you my friend, as well. If I didn't, I might not be here at Socina right now."

Karana didn't mind my somewhat rude remark. She, instead, nodded and responded, "That is right. You are the strongest Prince of this continent, after all. I believe that it would be much more meaningful to be able to use you, than have the mineral."

I always said that Karana and Nara were highly capable individuals. They both know very well who they should ingratiate themselves with and what they should reject. They don't believe in unrealistic futures. They only believe in

those that currently hold power. Their trust for me is not unconditional, and they won't use their nations' power to come rescue me when I'm in a pinch. If I want to maintain their loyalty, then I must hold the power they desire.

My guard unit didn't enter the lord's palace with me, not due to some special reason, but merely because the lord's palace was too small. As aforementioned, Socina City is only about the size of a district in the Royal Capital, so the palace, naturally, was only as large as a manor. It only consisted of a main building, and then two more supplementary buildings. As a result, my guards had nowhere to stay.

I must say that Karana really does lead a simple and unadorned life. It would be considered normal for Karana as a lord, even if she had a large palace and love for gems. She has the aura of being born into nobility and the wealth of a ruling family. However, she led a very simple and unadorned lifestyle. For example, she came to the Royal Capital in a very ordinary purple dress. The most expensive items on her were her amethyst earrings she wore on her ears. Right now, she was dressed in very plain riding attire. It was basically the exact same as the other members of the escort. Those who came and went from the palace were also dressed in very ordinary clothing.

At the Royal Palace on the other hand, if you weren't dressed in exquisite robes with pearls for accessories, you'd never be able to enter the palace in the Royal Palace. While my clothes look plain, the materials used for it are the best materials available on the continent, and designed by the dozens of best designers around. There was only one copy of the best treasures made. If they were broken or cracked, Nier would help me repair them. If Nier slipped up and threw them away, they'd make a new one overnight.

According to Castell, the royal family is royalty. If royalty was the same as commoners, how were they to prove they were the rulers? Royalty had to enjoy luxury, as they carried the most overwhelming pressure and mission in the empire. They were the rulers, so they had to distinguish themselves from the ruled.

The ruler had the right to enjoy the best treatment.

That's why even Mom, who has no greed for money, won't reject a life of

luxury or tributes sent from other places. For her, it's what a ruler should enjoy. Karana here has, basically, abandoned her special rights as a ruler; or rather, she's abandoned her identity as a ruler.

Karana looked at me as though she was in a dilemma, "Sorry, Your Majesty, your guards will have to stay in a hotel we have arranged. However, you need not worry, for the hotel we have designated has baths and hot water for washing.

My guards didn't want to leave. I waved my hand and replied, "It's fine. Philes, Shusia, you two follow me and guard me. Everyone else can head over. We're in Socina, and my relationship with Karana isn't bad, so it won't be so dangerous here. I believe that Karana will take care of my safety."

Karana nodded, "Though I cannot promise that you will be able to enjoy anything, I can guarantee your safety. The people of Socina City are simple and honest. There will be no assassins."

Philes stepped forth and told his fellow guards, "Everybody, go and rest. Shusia and I will guard His Majesty. As soon as something happens, I'll fire a shot. Rush over as soon as you hear it."

My guards nervously looked at me. They were very reluctant to leave. I could understand how they felt, since I was always finding myself in danger. Somebody was always after my life. It, therefore, was comprehensible as to why they were unwilling to leave.

I entered the main hall of the palace. I looked at the empty hall, which only had candles and sighed, "Karana, you truly do lead a simple life."

"I am but just an ordinary individual. Although I am somewhat wealthy, I think that my people need the wealth more. I did not take the mantle to enjoy a life of luxury. A lord's mission is to serve their people, not enjoy a life different to the people of the city."

I used to hear that a lot, but that was when I was still alive. When I got here, Castell told me that luxury was the sign of royalty. An Emperor is the most outstanding and venerated existence to begin with. For Karana to be able to have that sentiment, it goes to show that she is enlightened in a different way to others.

I looked at her to ask, “Don’t you think that you should have the right to enjoy what the city has to offer as the lord?”

“What are you saying? Ah, I think that we have different views.” Karana chuckled. Her gaze displayed a hint of disappointment. It was the sort of look revealed when you think that there’s nobody in the world who understands you. It showed her loneliness and self-mockery for herself that she was no longer bothered by. She tilted her head. With the same smile, she looked at me, “The people of the city are the city’s lord, are they not?”

## Ch. 26

Karana didn’t say anything else to me after that. She left after leading me to my room, so that I could get a good rest. We were going to talk again tomorrow.

The room wasn’t large. It was very simple. It was as though it was reserved for an ascetic monk. Philes and Shusia were on the other side. Although Philes wanted to stay with me, I turned him down.

It should be very safe in Socina City. That’s what my subconscious told me.

It was the first time I sat on a bed in another nation at peace. I looked at the room which only had a candle swaying. The baths here weren’t as wide. Next to the fire was a large wooden tub. Once the lid was removed, the steam would fill the entire room.

I removed my gear. It had been several days since I finally got to immerse myself in hot water. I leaned onto the wooden tub, and let out a comforted moan as my entire body went limp on the side of the tub. I looked at the ceiling that didn’t look as though it was cleaned and spaced out.

*“The people of the city are the city’s lord, are they not?”*

*‘She said that a little too soon...’*

I shook my head with a smile. Karana is a highly idealistic lord. She understood that the simplest principle in this world was, at the same time, the

most difficult to fathom. That was what helped her persevere in her battle for her ideals. Her idea doesn't fit with this era of imperialism. She can only see a small ray of hope no matter how hard she tries. In fact, sometimes, she won't even see hope.

Despite that, she still worked hard, nonetheless. She made her residence the same as residences outside. She distributed all of her money to her people. She's a very excellent lord and very smart woman; however, she gave everything to the city. She's different to Nara. Nara leads Karnashun herself, while Karana wants to serve her people wholeheartedly.

However, this will not help Socina rise. The city on the snowy mountain was dull as ever. The people weren't living in prosperity. Based off of the numbed and stern expressions of the people today, I could tell that the lives of the people in this city were by no means superior to those outside of it.

There were also the elders who couldn't understand her. As a matter of fact, they publicly opposed her. If I decided to be cruel back then, she would've lost everything.

*'Is she lost?'*

*'Does she feel that the path she treads is wrong?'*

*'Does she feel that her efforts are futile? Does she cry to herself at night?'*

*'I don't know.'*

*'But there's one thing I know, and that is the path she is walking is correct.'*

*'Perhaps there will be some minor mistakes and troubles. Perhaps she'll reach a strange path. Perhaps her ideas will not be accepted in this world. Perhaps all of the nations will oppose her.'*

*'What I do know, though, is that there was a country who took the same path as she is taking.'*

*'That country is now standing strong in the east. It rose up and became a glorious nation from rock bottom. Karana's thinking isn't wrong. Karana's vision lies further beyond any other, but she's suffering, too, for she is doing the right thing in the wrong era. She's chasing a light in the distance that can't be*

*reached in this dimension of darkness. ‘*

*‘She has a great ideal and the prospects look good; sadly, her timing is wrong. She’s in an era where the battle is the hardest, saddest, most confusing and despairing. Revolutionising this society’s systems and thinking is not attainable in a short timeframe. Karana might not see her ideal come to fruition. In fact, she might not even see a ray of it.’*

*‘I wonder if she’ll give up.’*

I discovered the water had become slightly cold after I slightly opened my eyes. Luckily, I returned to reality, or I’d be ill tomorrow, without a doubt... *‘I don’t get sick as a half-elf, do I...?’* I stood up in the tub then wiped myself dry and lay down on the bed. The hard wooden board on my back made me feel nostalgic. It felt as though I returned to my room in my bedroom back then.

Perhaps it was the nostalgic feeling that made my first night in Socina City feel so comfortable, allowing me to have a particularly restful sleep.

A maid woke me up the next day. Philes, Shusia and I went downstairs together and headed to the dining hall. Philes massaged his neck uncomfortably. He softly said, “What is this place...? The bed is less comfortable than our beds at Troy City... It’s basically a plank of wood! Your Majesty, are we not welcome here...? This is no way to treat guests!”

“If we could see Karana’s room, I’m willing to bet it’s even worse.”

I pat Philes on his shoulder and solemnly said, “Philes, your task is to protect me, not to come here on a holiday. Why are you complaining about your treatment already? Philes, have you mistaken your duty?”

“No, Your Majesty. It is just that ever since being on jobs with you, even Karnashun provided us with very good treatment. I never imagined that we would be treated this way here, which is why it has thrown me off...”

Philes glanced toward Shusia with concern.

*‘Oh, so your heart was aching, because your sweetheart didn’t get a good night’s rest, huh, you little punk?!’*

I laughed, “My room was the same as yours. We’re all living in the same

conditions. This is Socina we're talking about. We've all seen that the living conditions here aren't good, so don't complain. After all, I was sleeping when you were sleeping on the wooden boards, as well. Karana was sleeping, too. Nobody abandoned you."

"True... If you are not complaining, we, indeed, should not be complaining either."

Philes nodded, and then asked, "So, what is your schedule for today, Your Majesty?"

"I'm going to go and discuss some business with Karana, which I estimate will last until noon. Go and buy some clothes with the guards during this time. While not everybody can buy a new suit, you can get thicker scarfs and gloves. Here's my wallet. Go ahead and spend it."

I handed Philes my rattling wallet. Philes lingered for a moment before waving his hand and rejecting me, "No, no, no, we cannot use your money, Your Majesty. We..."

"What do you have? Didn't that come from the salary I pay you? Moreover, it was my mistake for not preparing thicker clothing for you all, so it's only fair that I should be responsible for getting you sufficiently warm clothing. If you're all quivering, you won't be able to protect me, either; so take it."

I shoved my wallet onto Philes chest. I checked to ensure that nobody was around before leaning over to his ear and whispering, "Remember to save some for yourself. Shusia is your girlfriend, after all. Buy her a hairpin or something. Don't be stupid and spend it all for the guys. Give your girlfriend something."

"Your Majesty that is not such a good..."

"You'll be fine if nobody knows!"

I looked at Philes' dumbfounded face. Boy, did I want to give him a punch or roughly rub his cheeks – ideally both.

*'If you lack EQ that badly, your only choice will be to go for the innocent Valkyries.'*

"Ah, Your Majesty. Good morning. Did you rest well last night? Ah, I asked an



unnecessary question. Seeing you look so energetic, it appears that you slept well last night.”

As soon as we arrived at the main hall, we saw Karana in her purple dress. It was a very simple piece of clothing without any patterns, and she didn't have any ornaments on. She only had a sapphire chest emblem at her chest.

I looked at her with a smile and responded, “I slept very well. Thank you for looking after me, Karana.”

“Not at all. I am aware that the living conditions are simple and crude to you. I am glad that you have no complaints. Now then, please come and have breakfast with us. While we both have things to say to each other, let us maintain a lighthearted atmosphere for this final relaxing breakfast!”

## Ch. 27

It was just as I expected. Breakfast was simple, too.

Karana didn't waste the precious sun in Socina. After breakfast, she invited me to take a walk together with her in the backyard.

I plucked a flower from the side out of curiosity. However, by the time I reached the rear of the palace, what I saw was no longer flowers, but snow sculptures. Every snow sculpture was exquisite. The sculptures were of two people in an embrace, kissing, walking hand-in-hand, and even reading together. I could see their affection for each other in their eyes.

I could tell that the female was Karana while the male was tall and big in stature. But despite them being snow sculptures, I could discern that the male was most likely old... At least, I haven't seen a young man have the beard of an experienced elder. For some reason, I felt that the man was old enough to be my father...

*‘Don't tell me that he's the previous lord.’*

Karana nostalgically looked at the snow sculpture, “There are no pastimes in Socina, so I just sculpted these. Sadly, when I picked up my tools, I struggled to

figure out what to sculpt. I did not know what memory I had that was worth sculpting into a snow sculpture that would last for millennia and beyond. After deliberation, only my husband – who is the previous lord of Socina – came to mind.”

“The previous lord...”

“Yes. Our love is akin to the icy snow. It is pure, true, flawless, and yet short.”

Karana nostalgically touched the ice sculpture. She then looked up at her late husband’s face and softly lamented, “Your Majesty, you might find it unbelievable, but my husband was already fifty-seven years old when I married him. We were truly in love, though. I firmly believed that our love was pure despite the insults and gossiping behind our backs, because if I wanted status and wealth, I had a better choice...”

She then looked at me, and I understood what she meant. She had the opportunity to leave this frozen snowy city way off in the distance at the time to come to the Royal Capital instead, which would’ve transformed her from a country bumpkin into the Royal Princess of the empire.

Nevertheless, she chose not to. She married a man that was decades older than her, not for money and power, but purely out of love.

“Your Majesty, I know how challenging it is to realise my goal. I did not think this way in the past. It was because of my husband. He tried hard all of his life. By the time I came to understand it, he had already travelled so far and walked for so long for the future that he might not realise. We were both aware that our ideal was very unrealistic in this world. In fact, Her Majesty mocked it once. Nonetheless, I guess it was because we could understand each other that we were able to embrace each other forever, never letting go.”

Karana let out a long sigh. She looked upward, and then narrowed her eyes. I could still see her transparent tears run down the corner of her eye, though. In Socina, even tears quickly turned to ice.

I didn’t speak. I just looked at the ice sculpture. The two in the sculptures looked so determined as if they had accumulated courage and determination over tens of thousands of years. Their love is truly too pure and too beautiful to the point that such love couldn’t exist in this world.

The two embraced for an uncertain future. One fell, but the other clenched her teeth and continued to forge ahead with her best efforts. I believe that they didn't pursue the ideal for money or fame, but purely for themselves, and the hope their loved one had for them. Their efforts shined especially brightly on this snow mountain similarly to saussureas growing on a snowy mountain, in that its pure and proud.

"I love him very much. I have never seen a man with such a strong sense of justice, so gentle and yet so determined. I would not hesitate to make an enemy of the entire world to be by his side; hence, I dared to refuse Her Majesty's offer to be your wife. Honestly speaking, now that I know you, you are actually an ideal partner, as well. Unfortunately, I had a better candidate."

Karana wiped the corners of her eyes. She took in a deep breath as she looked at me. She tried to steady her vocal chords and in a raspy voice cracked a joke.

"I would say this lord was a lot more impressive than I am."

"Why?"

I looked at the snow sculpture and replied in earnest, "I work hard for a target that's right in front of me, for myself and for the people around me. He worked earnestly for an uncertain future and everyone. The only expectations that I carry are the expectations of those around me. He, on the other hand, carried the hope of all of humanity."

Karana nodded. She then looked back at the ice sculpture and murmured softly as though she was speaking to herself, "However, Your Majesty... I, too, sometimes find myself confused. My husband and I tried so hard, but why is my city still the same? Why do I not see any prospects? If my decision and method is correct, why do I not see the results that I desire? Why do I feel as though nothing has changed?"

I looked at Karana. It was the first time that I detected weakness and puzzlement in her purple eyes.

She was truly lost.

No matter how determined one may be, if their efforts show no results after so much time and effort, they're bound to feel lost. Feeling lost, however,

doesn't mean giving up.

I turned to face Karana front-on and sincerely said, "That's fine, Karana."

She seemed to have been frightened by me. She turned to face me with a blank expression. She wondered what I was going to say next.

I looked at her and spoke at a somewhat fast pace, "Karana, believe in your goal. Your goal can be accomplished. The fair world that you want where everyone strives for the same world will be realised. You will see your people thrive, corrupt officials done away with and a country strong enough that nobody can threaten it in the future. You can do it."

"Thank you."

Karana smiled then touched her hair gently. She then thanked me, "Thank you for your encouragement, Your Majesty..."

"It's not encouragement!"

I interjected, and then pressed my hand on her shoulder. I then solemnly said, "It wasn't encouragement. Karana, I'm not encouraging you. I'm telling you what the future will be. Your husband didn't get to see it and you might not get to see it, either; but, the people will see it, nevertheless. As long as you persist and as long as you don't quit, your goal will be realised in the end."

She looked at me with a dumbfounded look. She then smiled helplessly, "But this is encouragement, is it not? Nobody is certain what the future will be..."

"No, I'm certain."

"Why...?"

"Because I've seen it with my own eyes; or rather, I witnessed it. I truly have witnessed it. A group of people, who had the exact same idea, established a nation with the same image as the one that you want! I, personally, witnessed it..."

## Ch. 28

“I understand what you mean now, Your Majesty.”

We finally returned to the guest hall. Karana sat to one side and looked at me. She leaned her body forward and said, “You want to know about the North, correct...? To be frank, I myself do not know it well, since the routes leading to the North are primarily treks between the snowy mountains. There are few people who manage to reach the North, let alone those who can draw a map of it and return. However, I promise that I shall do my utmost to assist you. Although my palace is not grandeur, I do have confidence in our library, for it is where my husband’s lifetime of blood, sweat and tears is.”

“I’ll leave it with you, then, Karana. Even if you don’t have a map, I still want all the information you have on the North. Anything will do.”

We both stood up. Karana looked at me as if she was smiling, yet not. She said, “I do not quite understand why you want information on the North, as it is neither rich nor have there been any legends on it. Other than the anthropoids that attack us every year, virtually nothing is made there.”

“Anthropoids”

“Yes. During winter every year... well, perhaps it is winter all year round at Socina City from your perspective. During the few months when it is coldest in the year, anthropoids from the mountains will attack us from all sorts of unimaginable places for food. Sometimes, they even kidnap human women. Consequently, Socina City is under martial law during that time.”

I’ll be honest. I had no idea about that. I only knew that trolls attacked the elves. The elves had an army stationed in the North, though; therefore, it wasn’t a huge issue during the annual attacks. Socina City is just a small city. I doubt that their army is large enough to seal all of the routes. Since their army in the vicinity is managed by the Empress, Karana has no authority to command them.

*‘Wait. Doesn’t that imply that I can’t head North from here, either? The mountain paths here lead to the North. Doesn’t that mean that the elves that were exiled to the North could actually have come here to Socina, and then returned to the south?’*

*‘Did those elves flee back here, or did they die in the North? Or did they not*

*discover this route?’*

*‘I don’t want to waste my time and energy on those elves whose status are unknown. I’m just wondering if I can head to the North through here. If I can, it’d be very convenient for me to reform ranks and replenish supplies if I marched my army North from the elven border and here together. Additionally, if we needed to do battle, we could mobilise the army as separate units, and then attack together.’*

“Do you know what routes are accessible?”

“We have only confirmed a few. It is not a simple task for humans to reach the North, though, given our physical capabilities. The weather in the mountains is, frankly, too cold, after all. Moreover, we might run into snowstorms or avalanches. If the anthropoids could survive there, I think that the anthropoids would not take the risk in coming here, either.”

She then giggled softly before resuming, “I think that I can understand what you are thinking. But nonetheless, I do not think that expanding in the North is a rational move. However, for you to have told me so many unbelievable things, I think that trying to stop you with rationality would not work.”

I smiled helplessly. I got swept up in the moment and told Karana all about my previous life in the other world. I’m not sure if she believed me or not. Maybe she thought that I made up a story. She didn’t cut me off, though. To the contrary, she looked at me with envy as I told her about the world that she had never seen before.

“I shall do my best to provide you with an answer as soon as possible.”

Karana and I walked to the entrance of the guest hall. Karana extended her hand out toward me then tilted her head with a smile, “Although you told me about Marxism, something theory and some machine that could fly as if you made them, I choose to believe that they exist. Perhaps you really did come from that great nation. I really, really, really want to go to that country. Since that group of people were able to get a nation that was dead broke to flourish; that means that our persistence is correct, right? That is enough for me. As long as we can prove that it is right, I feel consoled for my husband.

Karana gently wiped the corner of her eyes with a smile. She looked at me

with her sincere purple eyes that also showed that she was relieved to hear that. She then continued, “However, I wish to know more. I wish to know more about my ideal. I wish to know what is wrong and what is right. I wish to know more. I wish to know the results hundreds and thousands of years from now! Come to my room tonight, Your Majesty. I wish to know more. Your Majesty, I mean, Comrade; that is how you pronounce it, right...? What a nice way of addressing someone.”

She chuckled in a slightly shy manner. I suddenly felt revered when she addressed me as “Comrade”. Before me was the first person to suggest that theory and also my successor. I held her hand tightly. With a smile, I replied, “The production ability at the moment isn’t enough to make bliss and happiness attainable for everyone, but you’re headed in the right direction with your goal, Comrade. Don’t give up; believe me. This world will eventually become a red-flag world.

*‘What’s this considered? It’s as though Karana and I have formed a friendship between revolutionary comrades!’*

We held each other’s hands tightly.

*‘I don’t know how long she’ll have to work for here or how considerable the sacrifice will be. I don’t know how much will change or how long it will take, but I still believe that said future can be realised here with the efforts of countless people.’*

*‘That will also change this world to be more similar to my old home.’*

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“Vyvyan, why are you here again?”

“Am I that unwelcome?”

Elizabeth sighed. She looked at Vyvyan, who was covered in mist from head to toe, and said, “You can come, but do you have no sense of timing? You chose to come here when I’m bathing. Do you want me to argue with you or fight with you when I’m covered in steam? I’m not in the mood for that stuff right now.”

“You’re in a good mood, aren’t you?”

“Of course. Lots of good things have happened lately, after all.”

Vyvyan snickered, “What I bring up next might just rain on your parade. If I were you, I would reinforce your defence lines at the Northern border.”

“The Northern border? That’s where our boundaries intersect. What, you want to fight with us? Did you forget about my son?”

“I’m talking about the border at the canyon up North!!”

Vyvyan looked at Elizabeth; in a serious tone, she explained, “The anthropoids and trolls up North have attacked too frequently. I feel that the situation is dire. Additionally, The North is colder this year. If the races in the North can’t survive up there, their only option is to launch an attack against the South. As people with no retreat route, they will be fearsome opponents. If I were you, I would prepare as soon as possible!”

Elizabeth froze for a moment. She then stood right up from the water. She hesitated for a moment, and then exclaimed, “Large canyon... to the North... the city located there... is Socina! My son is there right now!”

“Hurry up and call him back, then!!!”

“I know! I’ll go and write a letter now! Aaaahh!! Why don’t we humans have an instant messaging method?!! I’ll organise an army; nevertheless, I need to call my son back first. I swear that if my son gets hurt, I’ll personally reduce the North to smithereens!!”

“Ah, we’re in consensus this time. If you want to destroy the North, I’ll help out...”

## Ch. 29

“So, centralisation is still required, even in that scenario?”

“No. The fundamental condition that needs to be in place for everyone to be able lead lives with equality is to have a stable country. In order for the country to be stable, there must be someone who acts as the leader. However, I’m not talking about one such as Her Majesty. All of the national policies and



government decrees must be approved of by the people, therefore allowing it to be representative of the majority. The leader is not someone who gives out commands, but one that creates proposals for change as per the suggestions off the people. The proposal is then legislated after the people approve of it. Consequently, the leader isn't an Emperor but a civil servant that represents the people."

"So the country's power is not said leader's power?"

"Correct. In order to avoid selfish behaviours, the country must have power. The country must control necessary goods and resources. This way, merchants won't be able to hoard goods under special circumstances for their own profits. It makes handling of resources more convenient. Further, decrees can be swiftly carried out even without the elders' discussion. Now, the country's administration must not bend the rules and regulations to benefit anyone, regardless of identity or status. They must be governed under the same laws as everyone else and that includes the leader of the country."

Karana looked at me with an earnest look. She quickly scribbled something down in her notebook. I stopped my speech and picked up my cup of water on the table. I looked at the rays of light between the tall mountains outside. I then looked back at Karana and said, "Karana, you must know that production must reach a certain point before anything I just said can be administered. If not, the people might not be able to enjoy the resources, even if you do manage to acquire them. Hence, the things I said aren't practical at this point in time. Meanwhile, Her Majesty's method of ruling is most appropriate... Of course, the elves' governing system is the closest to what you're aiming for, but their needs and society aren't compatible with humanity."

Karana nodded. She looked at her notebook in front of her and let out a long sigh, "I really, really look forward to seeing this world. It is not a single individual's country, but a clan's rule. The people select their representative; they voice their dissatisfactions; the leader does not enjoy special privileges and must serve the people. This world... all of the resources in this world belong to the hard-working people. I think that the leader of such a country would be very happy. We will all eventually become particles of dust, but the people will always speak of our story. We will forever be remembered in the people's

hearts. It is just unfortunate that I will not get to see such a beautiful world. But nevertheless, I am not sad, as I now firmly believe that this world will definitely become that world I envision.”

I looked at her. Despite not getting any sleep for the entire night, instead, recording every word and view I spoke about excitedly, Karana didn’t show any signs of fatigue on her face. To the contrary, she had a red flush on her face that displayed her anticipation and joy for the future. Pursuing a dream without a future is a very painful endeavour. After this one night, however, I transformed her fleeting dream into an actionable plan.

I shined a light into the dark night where there wasn’t so much as a single ray of light. I completely lit up the path in front of her. While I shouldn’t force changes to history and society’s development, I don’t want such a resolute idea ahead of the times to end up down the drain. Karana might not be able to see the world I spoke of, but as long as somebody picks up her notebook, the path forward will be walked.

“Your Majesty... One’s life sure is short...”

The sun shone in from outside. Karana’s purple eyes were particularly bright as the sun came up. She looked at me and softly went on, “However, I got to meet the man I love most and take a big step forward for our dream. It sure is a strange feeling. It feels as though I have completed the task I was born to complete... Perhaps a short life is meaningful, too. God did not provide us with enough time; instead, gave us limitless possibilities... Your Majesty, I am thinking that if I knew that you did not think that I was naïve, childish and would work together with me earlier on, I might have chosen to marry off to Rosvenor back then. Would that have also been a good choice?”

I chuckled and shook my head, “I don’t think so, Karana. If you married someone you don’t love for your dream, that wouldn’t be what you want, right? The happiest thing isn’t witnessing the moment your dream comes true, but our clumsy selves working together with someone who shares your dream. You also want to be able to love the one you work with. That’s what you want, and also the bliss you possess, am I right?”

Karana didn’t respond. Tears started to form in her eyes. She looked out the

window without speaking. I tilted my head and continued, “Moreover, to be frank, I think that I love my current wives more. After all, I think that Nier is a bit cuter than you are. That’s what I reckon.”

Karana turned her tears into a smile and joked, “I also think that my husband was a bit more masculine than you. After all, he would not say that another woman is cuter in front of me.”

I laughed and stood up. I then responded, “That’s because to me, you’re the ‘another woman’. Life is short, so there are no wrong decisions in life. If you’re happy now, then there’s no need to regret.”

“I agree. I now feel that it was great that I did not marry you, for that was how I got to spend a few years with the man I loved most. Those few years were enough to make me happy.”

Karana stood up and opened her arms. I stood up and gave her a light hug. Our hug was void of any romantic feelings. It was merely a simple hug of encouragement and consolation. As a matter of fact, our bodies didn’t even touch. We just lightly wrapped our arms around each other.

“Ah... Your Majesty...”

I need to make something clear.

For the sake of avoiding rumours, we didn’t close the door when we spoke at night. The door was open so that everybody who passed by could see us speaking at the desk. That led to... Philes finding out I didn’t return at night, and he also saw us hugging...

Karana let go of me casually and with a smile, said, “I shall not take up your rest time, then, Your Majesty. My wilfulness deprived you of your sleep. For that I am very sorry. Please go and have a good rest now. I will prepare what you need as soon as I can.”

“All right.”

I nodded, and then we smiled as we exchanged eye contact. I turned around to leave and Philes followed behind me. He looked at me with a very odd gaze for a long while, and then remarked, “Your Majesty, I once heard a weird rumour...”

“What rumour?”

“I heard that you used your body to conquer the female lords... It is said that you have sexual relationships with countless lords... I refused to believe it in the past... but... I now feel... mm... that there is some truth to the rumour...”

“What nonsense is this?!! We have a pure relationship! It’s one-hundred percent pure!!”

“Is it...?”

“If you don’t believe me, I’ll call Shusia over tonight...”

“I believe you!! I believe you!! I absolutely believe you!!”

## Ch. 30

Karana didn’t make me wait for long. After just one day, she brought a tall stack of books before me. There were new and old books. The old ones were so old that I was afraid gently touching it would reduce it to dust.

“This is all of the information I found related to the North. After examining the information, I have found out that there are lots of species in the North, including trolls and anthropoids, all of which have their own societies, which come in different shapes and forms. Further, they continue to fight each other in the North. The North is mainly flat land and has rivers which can be clearly spotted. However, they should all be frozen by now.”

I nodded and asked, “Do you have a map, then?”

“I have found a total of three maps.”

Karana carefully picked up the three maps. Two of them were very old while one was very new. Well, not particularly new. I took the two maps. The pen marks made on them were virtually indiscernible now. I spread the three maps out, and then asked, “The entrances and exits on these three maps are huge. Is it due to the land changing or are they drawing mistakes?”

Karana smiled helplessly and replied, “Your Majesty, I truthfully have no way

of being sure about that, as I have never been there. These maps were all drawn by adventurers. They were drawn centuries apart from each other. Nobody knows for certain if changes happened there or if the maps are inaccurate.”

“I can’t use these three maps to send my men to their deaths. I’m going to a place swarming with danger. Going there without a map is no different to marching to our deaths. I need to send scouts there to redraw the maps. I don’t need these three maps.”

Karana nodded then took the maps back. She responded, “Indeed, you are correct. You will have to slowly look through the rest afterwards. However, I cannot allow you to take them away, because they are things my husband left behind for me. Do you have any other plans for the next few days, Your Majesty?”

I looked at her and responded seriously, “No. Oh, right, I also want to personally make a trip to one of the routes that lead to the mountain paths in the North.”

Karana hesitated for a moment. She then frowned, “Why do you want to go to such a perilous place? Your Majesty, please forgive my bluntness, but that is no place for a holiday. It is actually a very dangerous place. I am not saying that you will definitely be attacked by anthropoids, but due to the weather on snowy mountain paths. That is your biggest foe. Your guard unit will not be able to remain on the snowy mountains for long with their equipment. You may truly find yourself in danger if you try to.”

“Wasn’t that the same with the desert?”

Karana mercilessly replied, “You prepared for a long time before going to the desert, did you not? You would not have had those strange large animals pulling your carriages, otherwise. Moreover, you brought a large volume of ammunition, supplies and weapons, right? Have you prepared anything this time, though? Is your only preparation is your guard unit? Further, your guard unit does not look as though they have prepared the correct attire. I strongly advise against going to the mountain paths. It, truly, is very dangerous on the snowy mountains...”

“Of course, I know that it’s dangerous, but not going just because it’s dangerous isn’t my style.”

I chuckled, “I’m going to have to trouble you to help out with my men’s attire, Karana. Although I’m not afraid of danger, I do have a brain. Leave the survival and safety arrangements in the snowy mountains to me.”

“You mean that you want me to come with you?”

The corner of Karana’s lips curled up into a small smile. She then said, “Normally speaking, I should refuse, for the reason that it would be wise to refuse to partake in something this risky, where there is clearly nothing to be gained, and to the contrary, is dangerous.”

“I believe you will agree, though.”

“Let me put it this way... I do not know why but when I see your expression, I end up believing that you can do many things that are considered impossible. I shall go with you. However, I must inform you to, one, not bring too many men as the paths in the mountains are very narrow; thus, bringing too many men would affect our speed. Moreover, we will all die in the snow if something happens and the path is blocked. Two, your men’s primary weapons are guns, correct? Do not fire your guns in the snowy mountains, as we will be doomed if it causes an avalanche. Lastly, bring as little luggage as possible, and everyone should bring a few rocks.”

“Rocks?”

“Heating them up, and then putting them in your clothes will keep you warm for a long time.” Karana gave a simple explanation, and then added, “I shall arrange for men to be our guides. Your Majesty, you must follow our instructions in the mountains. Do not act on your own accord, understood?”

“Understood.”

“All right, then. I shall satisfy your wish, if that is your wish.” Karana giggled softly, “But I absolutely refuse to go to that side with you. If you wish to cross through the mountains and over to the North, please do so on your own.”

“I don’t want to cross over, either. I just want to confirm one path I can use, that’s all.” I stroked my chin to think to myself for a bit before saying, “I initially

thought that I'd be able to obtain a map from you so that I could return and make preparations to expand in the North. I never expected I'd have to wait for so long before I could get a start."

Karana made a small bow. She then said, "Although it may take a bit longer, I believe that your goal is easier to achieve than mine. I shall now go and prepare. You should inform your men, as well. Choose your elites, bring along food, firewood and also clothes."

"Understood."

"Let us head out tomorrow, then. I estimate that we will need to travel for some time. It is very cold and dangerous on the snowy mountains, but the scenery is very captivating."

Karana giggled then turned around to leave. I sat on my chair and looked at the books before me. I sighed, and then carefully picked one up to begin to read through it...

*'Ah, fuck!! I can't read Socina's texts!'*

=====

"Miss! Hurry! Hurry!! You will be safe once you get over there! You just need to get over there!"

"Th-there are still pursuers behind us! They're catching up! They're catching up!!"

"Miss, you go on ahead. You people protect her well. Don't turn around no matter what happens. Just run. Now hurry, hurry to that side. When you see the humans there, inform them of what happened here! You must survive! You must! Miss, promise me! Promise! Our tribe's bloodline and the safety in the North rests in your hands now! You must survive! You must survive!"

"I... I..."

"Don't cry, Miss, don't cry. Do not worry about us. Turn around and run now. If you cannot return with glory then do not return. We are dying for you, our tribe and the safety of all of the souls in the North. As long as we live in your heart, we will never die! Now go! Go!!"

“I swear! I swear that I will not let your deaths be in vain! I will not let my father’s death be in vain! I will definitely bring back hope! I promise!”

“It’s all in your hands... Miss... Now... hurry and run!”



## Ch. 31

The snowy mountains were still some distance away from Socina City. We need to cross over the icy land in the north of Socina before we can arrive at the mountain paths. The snowy mountains looked as though they were right in front of us, yet it felt as if we never got closer. The sun was shining brightly overhead, but we couldn't feel any warmth from it. The breeze from the direction of the snowy mountains was freezing. It felt as though the winds were blades cutting our skin. Although we had changed into completely new gear, it still felt cold. It was as though the cold wind and snow pierced through our every cell, to sting every inch on our skin.

As opposed to calling them mountain paths, I would argue that they're better off described as the only place that you could walk on the mountains. We switched our horses out for Socina's short and long-furred horses that were specialised in traversing the mountains. These horses were unafraid of the cold winds. However, I could tell that the temperature here in the mountains and the outside were drastically different. It was as though they were two different worlds. The temperature in the mountains was so low that I was shaking from head to toe. Ice quickly formed on the red scarf mom made me due to my breathing. We couldn't speak to each other with the whistling cold winds and heavy snowfall. We had to tie ourselves together with ropes around our waists to avoid being separated.

Nightfall came even earlier in the mountains. I, however, was looking forward to night time already by noon. Despite being on horseback, the cold and fatigue wore me down, causing me to feel as if I ran out of energy. Had I not been on horseback, I probably would've had to take breaks after walking short distances.

At night, our guide led us to a small cave. There was quite a bit of residue from fires started.

*'It seems that a fair number of people have taken short breaks here.'*

We left our horses outside and everybody entered the cave; but as I said, it

was just a small cave. We were a group of about twenty people. When we squeezed into the cave, we virtually couldn't budge.

"Shusia, come, I'll hug you."

Philes looked at Shusia. Shusia was a little embarrassed, but she ended up walking over to him and sitting in his lap, nevertheless. She leaned on him and looked at the fire. Philes looked at us and said, "If this is how it is, let us sit around the fire, then... Your Majesty... Could you squeeze in with Lord Karana? Nobody has the right to hug Lord Karana. after all, right...?"

"I don't mind, but what about you, Karana?"

Hugging Karana for warmth is nothing but good news for me. She, though, is a married woman at the end of the day. She's considered a widow now, but still, there are other people here. It won't be good if somebody sees us, now, would it...?

Karana smiled, and then walked over to sit in front of me. She then wrapped the two of us up using an overcoat. She leaned her back on my chest. While looking at the fire, she smiled, "Staying alive in these mountains is of most importance. Further, this is not an unforgivable betrayal. Plus, there are very few women who have the privilege of resting on your chest, Your Majesty, so please allow me to use the Princess' spot for now."

"She's not going to become a Princess, is she...?"

"Philes, what was that?"

"No, no, no, I did not saying anything. I did not say anything!!"

I glared at Philes, causing Shusia to softly giggle She then asked, "Your Majesty, when you told Instructor Nier about you and Miss Lucia... or when you told Miss Lucia about Instructor Nier, did they just calmly accept it?"

I quickly recalled their Earth-shaking battle, Lucia's escape... and when Lucia saw Nier and me kissing in her wedding dress...

I touched my face then chuckled dryly, "Mm... I guess you could say they accepted it peacefully..."

"You sure are amazing, Your Majesty... to be forgiven after two-timing. Do you

have plans to find yourself another princess?”

“I’m not two-timing! I... How could I possibly find a third Princess...? I’m loyal in love! I loved Nier and Lucia, because they’re very important people to me. I’m not the kind of person who likes them just because they’re a female!”

*‘As if I dare to find myself a third girl... Nier and Lucia’s relationship has just relaxed a little. They would never allow me to have another woman. If there was going to be another woman, they’d have to be either Vyvyan or Elizabeth’s standard. Otherwise, she can’t beat the two of them...’*

*‘Nier and Lucia won’t hesitate to deal fatal blows when it comes to this, after all. I can’t let an innocent girl die at their hands...’*

Shusia looked at me. She quietly giggled, and then gestured with her hand to hush. I looked down to see Karana had fallen asleep. She sat within close proximity to me with her head down. Despite having fallen asleep, she didn’t lean against me. She maintained a few centimetres distance from me.

Though she said survival was important, she still minds physical contact. She’s a widow, all right, one that loves her husband.

I smiled. I didn’t pull her into my arms; instead, I raised the coat up higher, trying to cover her best as I could. The fire in front of me crackled. Nobody was singing and drinking the way we did in the desert. We, virtually, fell into silence not long after sitting down, with just the sound of the wind whistling outside.

My eyes gradually shut. My head lowered and entered my dreams.

=====

***Pant... Pant... Pant...***

*‘I’ve already ran for a very long time ... a very long time... truly... too long...’*

*‘How long have I run for? I don’t know... I don’t know... Probably around a week, I think... After my father was taken by that group and after I received my father’s head from them, I ran with all my might. I ran through the snow and northern winds. Behind me were screams and bloodshed. I’m getting further and further away from my home...’*

*‘I can’t turn back, though. I can’t take one step back. I don’t have anybody*

*with me anymore. There's nobody left with me to stop those maniacs...'*

*'My father did what he did for their sake...'*

*'My father did what he did for this continent...'*

*'Our tribe has done our best every generation for the sake of this continent that the gods abandoned...'*

*'Why... why... why.... does nobody remember that? Why didn't anybody stand up? My father gave up everything he had for them, and yet he couldn't even exchange it for mercy in the end. My father gave everything he had for that tyrant, yet had his life taken from him, just because he wouldn't hand me over...'*

*'That's too disgusting...'*

*'That's too despicable...'*

*'That's too cold-hearted...'*

*'I must continue to run. I must continue to run...'*

*'I must find the power to seek revenge. I must acquire the power to get revenge. I can't turn back now, but I must return to kill those traitors. I must save this continent again. I can't let my father's death be in vain. I can't let the continent my tribe has protected for centuries be destroyed now.'*

*'Run... Run... Run!!'*

She suddenly slipped, causing her red silhouette to roll down the snow.

She couldn't get to her feet again...

## **Ch. 32**

When I woke up the next day, I was almost incapable of standing up.

It wasn't because my legs were frozen numb, but because our clothes from yesterday were covered in snow, which the fire melted. The air behind us, on the other hand, was very cold, thereby causing the parts of our coats that were in contact with the ground to freeze up and attach to the ground. It was frozen

stiff. Philes had to break it with his sword in the end.

The weather outside was the same. It was still snowing and blowing cold winds. We made ourselves a warm breakfast using the fire. It took ages for the rye bread we boiled in water to soften up. However, that was the most appropriate food to bring on our journey. I couldn't bring luxurious foods in these conditions, so I had no choice but to suffer with my men.

After we finished breakfast, we exited the cave, only to discover that our horses oddly formed a circle.

Under normal circumstances, horses gather together instead of forming a circle, like this, as gathering together would help each other stay warm. Forming a circle, like this, made it clear they were trying to protect something inside the circle.

I walked over to the centre of their circle and paused.

*'Mm.'*

I didn't see anything that surprised me, but it was the contrary. I was bewildered, for I didn't see anything.

There was nothing, but white snow on the ground. The only difference from yesterday was that our traces from yesterday had been covered by the snow.

Karana wrapped her thick cloak around her then walked up to me to ask, "Your Majesty, did something happen?"

I scratched my head and replied, "It's strange, precisely because nothing happened..."

Karana smiled, and then responded, "I feel the opposite way. I am very glad that nothing happened. If something happens in this weather, it will be very dangerous. Since nothing happened, let us not waste any more time. Let us get going, Your Majesty. We will see a small path once we reach the top."

"All right, let's get going, then."

Just as I turned around and went to grab my horse, my horse suddenly bit my cloak and pulled me with all its might. I looked at my horse, feeling dumbfounded. I was completely baffled by what it was trying to do. It pulled me

into the centre of their circle then faced up to the sky and neighed. I was still baffled when I looked at it. I had no idea what it was trying to do.

Karana looked at us, feeling dumbfounded, too. She then, suddenly, bent over at her waist and quickly swept the snow aside, revealing a red silhouette in the white pile of snow. It resembled a scene of blood flowing out from it.

Karana picked up the red body. She nervously looked at me. She passed me the small body and stuttered, "Your Majesty... Wh-Why... is there an anthropoid here...? Why....?"

"An anthropoid?!"

I blankly looked at the girl in my arms. She was wearing very thin clothing. Her face under her hoodie was frighteningly pale. Her black eyebrows were virtually glued together by ice. Her lips were totally pale. She was curled up as though she wouldn't ever wake again.

My suspicion was soon proven, because where she had two holes at the top of her cloak, there were two long, pointy and furry ears sticking out of them. They were different to elves' ears. Her long ears were covered with short and smooth red fur. I could feel something fluffy with my arm I was carrying her with.

*'Is this a tail?'*

"Don't move out for now!! Don't move out! Return into the cave! Guards, gather at the entrance! Prepare for battle! Stay vigilant!!"

"Your Majesty?"

I carried the girl in my arms into the cave. Karana looked at me with confusion and followed in behind me. I turned my head around to look at her sternly and said, "The back of this girl's cloak was cut open with blades, which indicates that she's being chased. Whatever the case is, an anthropoid being chased by other anthropoid, is an anthropoid that I need. I'm positive that there are pursuers chasing her right now. I won't let a godsent gift to me get snatched away!"

After carrying the girl that appeared who knows when or where, I desperately grabbed a handful of snow from outside and brought it in. After removing the girl's plain clothes, her entire body was revealed to me. She had a perfect body.

She was an anthropoid, but the only beast parts she had were her long furry ears and her long and furry red tail. Her tail was particularly smooth. Her tail was also the only warm body part of hers.

I desperately rubbed her body with the snow.

*'I don't know if my knowledge from the other world is applicable here, but I think it should be fine.'*

Karana helped me out. I removed my clothes, and then tightly embraced her before wrapping us both up with an overcoat.

"Don't die... Don't die... Don't die, damn it...! Don't die!"

I leaned the girl's small, but beautiful face on my shoulder. Her long ears were lightly touching my head. I tightly hugged her as I desperately attempted to warm her up.

When I thought about it after, that must've been our first skin-to-skin contact.

Our skin was tightly glued together. I used my body heat to warm up her frozen body. I made physical contact with the pretty and cute young girl the first time we met. We didn't know each other's names. I didn't know where she came from or even what race she was, but here we were, tightly glued together, exchanging our body temperature.

"Your Majesty! We have an enemy! We are under attack! We are under an enemy attack!!"

"Stop them!"

I heard the sounds of blades clanging outside, as well as howls that sounded akin to the cries of beasts. Karana, who was next to me, looked on edge. She stared outside without looking away. Her lips quivered, "Your Majesty... they are this anthropoid's pursuers, right...? Your Majesty, I need to tell you that the anthropoids are much more formidable fighters than humans are... They have very thick fur. and even if you pierce their fur, unless it is a fatal wound, they do not seem to... We lost seven or eight men just to hunt two of them..."

Philes came over to us completely covered in blood while the racket was going on outside. His cloak was covered in blood that had frozen. The fierce

wind couldn't even get a corner of his cloak to budge. He walked up to us and tossed two furry heads with fangs down. He panted and reported, "There are over ten of them left outside. I think that you would not wish to see so many, so I brought back two."

"Wh-..."

Karana looked at Philes with utter disbelief. Philes didn't pay attention to Karana's gaze. He, instead, scanned the heads on the ground with curiosity, and then asked, "Your Majesty, are these anthropoids?"

"No, they're dead people."

I looked at the girl in my arms. I grabbed hold of her hands and noticed that her hand was gradually warming up, while her body was slowly regaining suppleness. I looked at Philes and added, "Continue standing on guard. Prepare the horses. As soon as this girl comes to, we're returning. It's baffling to me that there are only about a dozen of them. There might... be even more coming."

## Ch. 33

Philes panted. He stood at the entrance of the cave and anxiously shouted, "Your Majesty, if we have to continue defending, we might not be able to keep it up!! It is as if there is no end to them. They keep coming one group after another as we kill them! Your Majesty, if we do not leave now, we will not have the energy to leave!"

With the girl in my arms, I asked in a shocked voice, "Why are there so many?! Could it be that they're not a small pursuit team?"

"I am not sure. In any case, they keep coming wave after wave. We have no idea where they come from while the snowfall is too heavy, and they are exploiting our disadvantage!"

The guide from outside then ran in and hastily reported, "Your Majesty, we must leave quickly! It looks as though a snowstorm is coming. If we do not leave now, we will be trapped here!"



Karana looked at me. I clenched my teeth. I pulled the young girl into my arms then wrapped the both of us up tightly with the overcoat. I then used a rope to affix her firmly to my chest. Then, I stood up and said, “Let’s quickly return now, then. With waves of anthropoids coming the way they’re coming, I’m starting to think that this isn’t a simple hunt. I’m worried that Socina is in danger. If it’s this hard to detect them coming and going, they might be hiding in the vicinity of Socina.”

Karana nodded. She didn’t say anything, but I could see her anxiety in her purple eyes. I know how much she loves Socina, so naturally, she desperately wanted to return when her Socina City is under threat. I want to wait a bit longer, but it doesn’t look as if that’ll be possible.

When the guards outside heard that we were retreating, they let out sighs of relief. Although my men didn’t suffer any casualties, they were out of energy, and therefore couldn’t continue fighting. We quickly mounted our horses. I saw the corpses piled up on the narrow mountain path.

*‘Are they the anthropoids?’*

They’re pretty similar to what I imagined. They’re furry and wrapped in simple clothing. Their heads resemble the heads of wolves. However, they didn’t stand out when compared to humans. They had firm flesh and thick skin. If my guards’ swords weren’t high-quality swords made by elves and they weren’t trained by Nier, we really may have suffered heavy casualties.

I rode at the forefront, racing back to Socina as fast as I could. The fierce wind whistled. The snowflakes that hit me felt as if they were bullets. They hurt when they smacked me in the face. The wind was blowing so strong it was, virtually, impossible to breathe. I narrowed my eyes. Despite having enhanced senses – thanks to my elven genetics – I still couldn’t see anything in the heavy snow.

*‘It appears that a snowstorm really is coming.’*

“Your Majesty, watch out!!!!!!”

As I was galloping along the path, Philes suddenly yelled out loudly. I instinctively tugged on my horse reins. In the next instant, a dark silhouette came down from overhead while roaring. A huge axe swung down in front of me, brutally smashing my horse’s heads to mush.

My horse didn't even get to neigh before its head was demolished. Its blood sprayed forth, heating up a section of the snow. I made an emergency dismount and rolled to the side, almost rolling off the mountain. Philes caught my cloak from behind and pulled me back, while Shusia roared and charged forward.

She engaged the big and dark silhouette.

The axe blew the turbid air away with its swing. As the axe was swung, the snow blew away with the wind, allowing me to finally see the face of the large anthropoid. He wasn't wielding a quality axe. It was a plain stone axe, but it matched the uncouth swings and lethal power of its wielder.

I finally understood where they came from.

*'They're jumping down from above!'*

*'For humans, that would be the equivalent of jumping across cliffs, but it's the same as taking a stroll to the anthropoids!'*

"Rargh!!"

He roared as he swung his axe. Shusia dexterously jumped out of the way then hopped onto his axe. Her cloak loudly fluttered in the wind before she stabbed him through his chest. Shusia forced the sword in deep, and then forcibly pulled it out. He cried out in pain, and then crashed into a side of the mountain.

"Did you finish him?"

Shusia gasped for air. She then slashed at his throat, causing blood to spray as if he was spitting lava. Philes then pulled me back. He looked at the anthropoid, and then in a somewhat surprised tone said, "Let us go... Your Majesty... Ah... why... why is the Earth quaking...?"

I noticed that it was dark overhead. I thought more of them had jumped down. I, therefore, instinctively drew my gun. We're in the middle of the path right now, so we could be attacked from the front and back. If we get trapped in a pincer attack, we'll have no choice but to kill our way out of here. With every man who can wield a sword, we've got an extra combatant.

"Your Majesty... we may not be able to escape..."

Karana looked at me with her pale face. The ground below our feet began to quake, and the sound of an avalanche came from overhead. Karana's expression looked particularly grim. She looked at me and softly said, "Perhaps the anthropoid's axe... caused a snow avalanche..."

"Wh-..."

I wasn't surprised; I just didn't have an opportunity to finish uttering my response before our entire team got caught in the fierce avalanche. My vision instantaneously became zero. My ears were, practically, filled with snow, with just the crashing and quaking, rumbling in my ears. The snow swept us away to somewhere. I couldn't do anything. In fact, breathing, itself, was very difficult.

I instinctively hugged the girl in front of me tightly, doing my best to cover her with my body to protect her.

Then my brain was just smashed with chaos and the world spun...

I had no idea what happened after that...

I wasn't sure if I could survive the avalanche.

=====

I seemed to catch sight of a red pair of eyes looking at me. I could seemingly feel a warm sensation from my chest that enveloped my entire body... spreading to my every nerve...

"Don't die... don't die... You saved my life... so... I won't let you die!"

*'I've never heard this voice before...'*

*'It's right next to my ear...'*

*'I think somebody is hugging me...'*

*'I can feel a warm sensation from my waist to my chest...'*

*'It's soft...'*

*'I feel as if there's something smooth, well-kept and furry teasing my skin...'*

*'A pair of hands...'*

A pair of small and warm hands held mine...

“Don’t die!”

*‘Is she speaking to me...?’*

I struggled to open my eyes. All I saw was a field of white and a pair of red eyes. The pair of eyes was different to Mommy Vyvyan’s. The pupils weren’t round, but an odd crescent moon shape. Those eyes were trained on me right now. Below those eyes, was a red pair of lips gently moving. Two sharp fangs were vaguely visible...

“Kind Man... don’t die... don’t die because of me... don’t... We’ve only met for the first time... Please... don’t let someone die for my sake again... I will definitely save you... Come back to me! Come back to me! Come back to me!”

“Can’t you see that I’ve opened my eyes?! Who saves people by slapping them across the face the way you do?!!!!”

## Ch. 34

I was lying on the young girl’s thighs.

Frankly, I don’t think this girl has any worldly common sense. Usually, the first thing you do upon saving a man trapped in the snow wouldn’t be slapping his face as much and hard as you could. However, my belly and chest felt very warm. There was something fluffy covering my chest. Wondering what it was, I went to touch the fluffy thing...

“Don’t go touching me there, you creep!!”

I took another slap to my face. Seriously, the slap really hurt. She whipped the fluffy thing on my chest away, thereby exposing my chest to the cold. The young girl fumed as she looked at me. She folded her arms and exclaimed, “Do you not know not to touch a young girl’s tail, you rude human?! You can’t be so impolite even if you did save my life!”

“No, normally, young girls don’t have a tail...”

I put my hand on my forehead. I saw the white ground.

*'It appears that I'm in a stone cave.'*

The young girl knelt to one side and vigilantly pulled her tail behind her. She looked at me with her red eyes that were the shape of a crescent moon. I shifted my gaze to her. Her pointy ears twitched. She shifted her line of sight and in a soft voice, said, "Don't stare at me that way. You're such an impolite human..."

"No... the main thing is... you're different to us and those anthropoids... so I'm slightly curious....."

She snorted then folded her arms. She proudly wagged her tail, and then responded, "Of course, I'm the venerated eldest daughter of the leader of the Moon Fox Tribe. Our tribe is different to those anthropoids. Our blood is pure. We're a prominent tribe in the North. You should salute me in my presence, you impolite human. However, I shall forgive your rudeness, as you saved my life! My name is Ling Yue. Ling. Yue. Remember my name."

"Is it...?"

I chuckled, and then adjusted my clothes. I looked at her and made a small bow. I then continued, "I am the Prince of the Rosvenor Empire and the elven kingdom, Troy Galadriel Rosvenor. It seems that I am of higher status than you are, so I shall forgive your rudeness..."

"Galadriel?!"

Ling Yue, in other words, the long-eared young girl with a tail from the wolf tribe, suddenly stood up before I finished. She looked at me with astonishment. She grabbed my chest with one hand and shouted, "You're a Galadriel?! The Elven King Galadriel?"

"Calm down..."

I looked at her two sharp fangs on both sides of her lips and pressed my hands down on her shoulders. She smacked the ground with her tail. She was on the verge of tears. She tightly gripped my clothes at my chest and thumped her head on my chest hard. I didn't know what she was trying to do. I raised both of my hands up high to indicate that I wasn't intending to do anything to her.

She leaned her small body on my chest and shook violently, “I’ve found you... I’ve found you... Galadriel... Galadriel... I finally... finally...”

She gripped my clothes tightly. Her tears started to course down her face. The tears on her eyelashes had frozen. I looked at her feeling stupefied and asked with puzzlement, “Yes, I am a Galadriel... but what exactly do you want me to do? How do you know the surname of the Elven King? Are there elves over there?”

“Only you Galadriels can save us... Only you... only the Galadriels can. Without you... without you... our... I... father...”

I couldn’t make out what she was saying. Her weeping left her distraught, and her speech was all muddled. I, however, suddenly realised something.

‘How did we manage to communicate without any pressure?’

It wasn’t because of mana, but that we spoke the same language.

*‘Why do we speak the same language?’*

She cried on my chest while still maintaining her grip on my shirt. She thumped her head on my chest hard and said something that I couldn’t understand at all. I had no idea what she wanted me to do, but I could faintly feel something.

*‘She’s a young girl that fled for her life with fierce anthropoids in hot pursuit. Why did she have to flee? What can you derive from a young girl who was arrogant and proud crying so sorrowfully?’*

*‘It meant that she, perhaps, hopes that I can avenge her.’*

She hoped that I could help her return.

I don’t know what exactly happened in the North, but it must be related to mana. It must have something to do with this girl’s tribe and elves. That would explain why this young girl in front of me was so worked up. I don’t know what she’s thinking, but I think she can get me what I want.

“I beg you...”

I pressed my hands on her shoulders, looked at her face and solemnly said, “Don’t cry. Please don’t cry. I’ll listen to you, and I’ll consider your request, but

you need to properly tell me what the matter is. Trust me, I'll help you. I definitely will, I promise. As long as you tell me what's the matter..."

I extended my hand out to wipe her tears on her face away, but for some reason, my hand grabbed her ear...

*'Ah, the fluffy feeling feels so nice...'*

**Smack!**

I received another big slap to my face again. And then I got slapped again before I could react.

"You are not to touch my ears, you rude man!!!!"

"Why do you like slapping me across the face so much?!"

The young girl looked at me, feeling angry. Despite her face still having traces of her tears on it, she still looked at me with a furious gaze. She put her hand on her hip then pointed at my face and shouted.

I touched my face. We had only exchanged a few sentences, yet she had slapped me a number of times already. I just had a strong urge to touch her twitching ears and tail she wagged from side to side. Plus, her tail she wagged around was particularly warm and smooth. I really wanted to play with it in my hands.

Just as she went to give me another ear full, her ears suddenly budged. After making a few circles with them, she suddenly went up on her toes and covered my mouth. She whispered, "Shut up! Don't speak! Somebody is coming! Lots of them, in fact!"

"Hmmm!!!"

I said shut up!! Aaahh!!"

She suddenly moaned, and then powerlessly leaned onto my chest. I grabbed her tail that wasn't easy to grab, "Why can't I speak?! Did you forget that I had others with me?! It must be them searching for me! If we don't reveal ourselves to them now, we'll never be saved!"

Although I was slightly angry, her tail felt so nice...

I grabbed her tail out of curiosity and stroked it a few times.

*'How smooth and warm!'*

"Ah... Ah.... Don't... Let go... Hmm.... Mmm... Let go... bastard... let go!"

She squirmed with her body while she softly panted. She gripped my chest tightly as her body trembled with nervousness.

"... Mm."

She suddenly leaned onto my chest without any resistance. She gripped my clothes with red hot flushes on her face and whispered, "Don't just go touching my tail... only... only... only my husband can touch it..."

"You have a husband?!"

I immediately let go, because I was shocked.

"Of course I do, you damn creep!! I told you not to touch my tail already! You creep! Bully! Bastard!"

***Smack! Smack! Smack! Smack!! Smack!!***

*'Wow...'*

*'So her tail can change her personality now, huh...'*

*'Also, how the heck did your five slaps feel as though you practiced them to mastery?!'*

## Ch. 35

"I told you not to speak!"

"How was I supposed to know that they weren't my men?!"

Ling Yue and I angrily made eye contact. Truthfully, I wasn't angry that we were taken away; I was angry, because I was concerned for Karana and company. To be honest, I don't care too much about Karana's well-being, but I do care about my Philes and Shusia. I don't know if they'll be saved from the snow avalanche.



I, in all honesty, never expected these people to not be Karana and company, but instead, natives of the snowy mountains. They carried guns, bows and arrows on their backs. I thought that they were going to attack us, so I had my gun ready to fire, but they didn't do anything to us. They just surrounded us, and then requested for us to leave.

Perhaps it was because he noticed our tense expressions, a native turned his head around to say with a smile, "I told you, Your Majesty, we do not intend offend you. We just hope that you can come with us. We have already rescued your friends, so you do not need to worry. We noticed your group when the snow avalanche happened. Fortunately, it was not a serious avalanche. A big snowball dropped down is all. After we saved your friends, Lord Karana said that you had not yet been found, so we led a search for you."

"Are Karana and the others all right?"

"They are all fine."

"That's good."

I was relieved to hear that. I then looked at them and asked with concern, "What about the anthropoids, then? What happened to them? How many of them are there? We did we get attacked?"

His expression turned grim. He sounded as if he struggled to reply, "It seems... to be a very fierce attack, Your Majesty... The anthropoids are launching a big attack. This is no longer the usual robbery, but an actual assault. We have no idea where they came from. They gathered in in the frozen land. They should be attacking Socina City now..."

"Oh, right! Human! I should inform you!"

Ling Yue grabbed me by my chest and pulled me over. She looked at me and solemnly said, "I never thought that they'd move so fast! Human! You need to hurry and prepare for war! The weather in the North has become too harsh to survive. All of the species in the North are banding together. They want to take over your land! This is just the first unit. There will be a big army attacking after! You need to hurry and prepare! I came to report this to you!!"

"Why didn't you say so sooner?!"

“It was pointless to bring it up in that cave! Plus, it’s your fault, Galadriel! You made me forget it!”

I pressed a hand on her shoulder and shouted, “I need more information! I need the time they’ll strike, their numbers, the location and their equipment!”

“I don’t know!!”

Ling Yue was in pain, as I used too much strength; therefore, she pressed her hands on my shoulders. I didn’t realise how much strength I used.

*‘I have no time and am in no mood to mind these trivial things. I need to know more. If they want to attack Troy City from here, it’ll only take them a few days; meanwhile humanity is completely unprepared for war. Heck, the military was called back South. ‘*

*‘How is my Troy City going to defend itself?!’*

“I said, tell me more! Aren’t you a noble?! Tell me! Tell me...”

***Slap!***

Ling Yue pulled her hand back and looked at me coldly. She then said, “Calm down! I came to inform you, not for you to find fault with! I wouldn’t be in such a pathetic state if I knew their plan. Their leader is extremely cautious. He wouldn’t let us, those who oppose war, find out any information. I only know some information. I’ll tell you all I know, but what’s the point of you getting worked up now?! Where’s your army?!”

The native was a bit surprised to see me get slapped in such fashion. However, he quickly interjected when there was a pause between us, “She is right, Your Majesty. You should calm down for now. Our elders have realised the severity of the situation. That is why we want to discuss the upcoming war with you. Socina City is being attacked right now. If we do not hurry, Lord Karana is going to run back there alone.”

“Ah... Yeah... My guards and the military are there, so they should be able to hang on...”

I touched my cheek that Ling Yue slapped. I looked at her and spaced out a little. She looked at me with a frown and muttered under her breath, “Are you

actually reliable...?”

“I won’t let the people in my territory get trampled on. I was planning on getting a step ahead, but I’ll just have to defend first now.”

I looked ahead and walked forward. I stepped passed the piled up snow and looked into the distance. I exclaimed, “If this is a war, I won’t take a single step back, because I’m a descendant of the Rosvenor family and the Galadriel tribe!”

“Let’s hurry, then!”

We went around the mountain path and arrived at a large empty space between the mountains. There was a big fire lit up in the centre of the area. A group of natives sat around the fire with their white animal fur draped on their shoulders. Behind them was a fully-equipped militia. Karana, Philes and the others sat around the fire with their cloaks draped over their shoulders. Karana’s anxiety showed in her eyes. She couldn’t ask for anything more than to return. It was her city, after all.

“You’re here, esteemed Prince.”

An elder who was the leader stood up when he saw the two of us. The elders next to him stood up one after another and looked at us. I said, “It’s too late for formalities and drivel. Now, tell me what happened. What did you exactly call me here for? Socina City is currently under attack, so I’m not willing to waste a second.”

The elder laughed in a soft voice. He looked at me and replied, “Your Majesty, you and Her Majesty truly are cut from the same mould. When she faced our pursuers back then, she could not wait to attack the same way you want to go and rescue Socina right now. Her Majesty selflessly protected us back then. She gave us the right to live and freedom. We cannot give her anything, since we are in the snowy mountains, but it seems that we can repay you.”

The elder firmly waved his hand, and then pointed to the fully-equipped soldiers behind to say, “These are the most elite warriors in the mountain fortress nearby. Their bravery and combat skills are without equal. We can bravely fight with the anthropoids in the mountain. Your mother saved us, so allow us to repay you. Your Majesty, these soldiers shall follow your command!”

I looked at them. They're all natives, but all of them looked as excited and nervous as one another. They looked as though the battlefield wasn't a place of death, but a journey to glory.

I looked at them and simply asked, "What do you want?"

They looked at me and responded loudly, "Wine."

I froze for a moment, and then laughed loudly. I looked at them and swung my arms open. Courage is contagious. If one man steps forth, the thousands upon thousands behind him will also step forward. I was initially slightly afraid and puzzled, for I didn't know what I had to do next. Now, however, I could feel their courage when I looked at them. In that moment, I suddenly felt that all of the problems had been resolved.

*'No matter what city it is, its warriors are its invincible city walls!'*

"All right. We've never known each other until now; as a matter of fact, I didn't even know my mom protected you, but since you've chosen to follow me, I shall let you feel proud as my mother did! If you devote your loyalty to me, I shall give you as much glory and wine as you desire!"

"One more thing, Your Majesty."

I looked at the elder and he pulled a small figure out from behind him. She was clearly just a young girl. She had long-blond hair and lifeless purple eyes that were similar to when Lucia is bored with nothing to do. She was really small in stature. She was probably around just twelve or thirteen, but the two long swords on her back and cloak that resembled of a wandering swordsman made her back look particularly wide.

"This is my daughter. She is the smartest and bravest warrior in our entire tribe. I shall now entrust her to you, Your Majesty. Please make the most of her bravery!"

The elder pushed the young girl over to me. I took a step back and became alert. I developed a grudge against Iolus after Alice's stunt...

"Greetings, Your Majesty. I am Tanya Oradaidife... Since you said that we do not need to be concerned with formalities, shall we go and slaughter those anthropoids now?"

The young girl looked up at me. I caught a tinge of savageness appearing in her purple eyes. She initially had an expressionless look, but when she said, “slaughter those anthropoids,” a savage smile surfaced on her face.

## Ch. 36

Technically speaking, this “army” of mine wasn’t a complete army. They were technically a group of ruffians with faith.

If this group could truly show combat capabilities, they would still need to undergo legitimately organised training for some time to ensure they follow orders and display discipline, as well as being able to learn teamwork. Otherwise, they’d just be a group of suicide bombers.

I don’t have the luxury of time to train them now, though. And if they’re going to train, they *must* be trained at Troy City! My current mission is to dismantle the siege at Socina City.

I looked at Karana who was next to me. She bit down on her lip tightly and stayed silent. I consoled her by saying, “Karana, you don’t need to worry. My guard unit is in the city. I don’t think that they’ll sit by idly and watch. You’ve seen their strength. It will be very hard for the anthropoids to break into Socina City unless they launch a heavy assault.”

“... I know.”

Although Karana said that, her expression showed that she was still as worried and tense as before. It’s her city and her most cherished memory with her husband, after all. Nothing that I say can put her at ease. She needs to see Socina safe and sound before she can be at peace.

I have no need to speak, then. I turned my head back to the front to focus my attention ahead...

“Hey... if you’re going to sit on my lap, can you stop moving your ears around?!”

The pointy pair of ears in front of me kept moving back and forth, while her

fine fur brushed against my face. From my lap, Ling Yue irritably moved her body around, and then responded, “I can’t help it. If I had ears as short as you humans, I wouldn’t be able to hear so many sounds now, would I? I’m doing this for our sake.”

“Careful, I might grab your tail...”

***Slap!***

“I was joking! It was a joke!”

“Who makes jokes about a girl’s purity?!”

She turned her head around and looked at me, feeling enraged. She would’ve gnawed my neck off if it was feasible. I massaged the spot she slapped while looking at her, “Do you think that just anyone can ride on my horse? I’m the Prince of humans and elves! Not even Lucia had the right to ride with me back then!”

“I’m the only daughter of a noble fox tribe; I’m a descendant of the most venerated race, so I have every right to ride on your horse. You should feel honoured, human. In the North, being able to see my face is considered an honour!”

Ling Yue proudly looked at me. I chuckled and didn’t respond. Tanya, who rode at the forefront of the team, stopped her horse then made way. She looked at me and softly said, “In front.”

“Ah, oh.”

In front of us is the gap between the feet of the mountains. There’s a gradual incline from here that we can head straight up from. Below is the ice plain we entered the mountains from. The icy plain that was previously empty was now full with a massive horde of brown, messy anthropoids. They resembled a huddle of baby flies that looked utterly disgusting. Their howls could reach our position.

*‘They should be the first team.’*

As they were, presumably, the first team, they didn’t have weaponry for a major city assault. The only things they had were timber ladders that they put

together using wood that they chopped down from who-knows where, as well as a simple block of wood to ram the city door.

I was surprised to see that they had simple catapults, too. However, I noticed that what they loaded the catapults with weren't rocks but corpses, well, technically either heads or limbs. They even lit them up before catapulting them into Socina City. I felt that they weren't after Socina City, but destroyed it, just because it happened to be there.

Socina City was still being defended. Due to lacking effective machinery for attacking a city, the anthropoids couldn't take the city down, yet. Based on the numbers on the ice plain, though, Socina City will definitely be overrun by this massive horde.

"Your Majesty!!"

"Karana, calm down; they have the numbers advantage on us. Our main fighting force is in the city. I need to come up with a plan to defeat them."

I bit my finger nail and looked down below, feeling anxious. I looked anxiously at the horde of anthropoids swarming toward the city.

*'How shall I attack to defeat them? We're currently outnumbered, and I've never fought them, so I have no idea what tactics they employ. How can I ensure their defeat?'*

"Defeat them?"

Tanya looked at me with her lifeless eyes and repeated herself again in an odd way.

"Uhm, that's right... I want to defeat them... Ah!! What are you doing?!"

While I was still thinking, a dark silhouette vanished before my eyes, leaving a vague white shadow behind for me. Before I could give an order, Tanya already galloped down and charged toward the horde of anthropoids all alone. Her small silhouette looked lazy atop her horse, but she had already drawn the large sword on her back.

"Hurry! After Tanya! After her!"

I quickly got up and mounted my horse. I didn't know what Tanya was up to

or how competent she was, but I was asked to look after her. I, therefore, can't just watch her march to her death. It's not my fault, but I still don't want to see someone, who's willing to serve me, die in front of me.

All of the soldiers wore excited looks. They drew their sabres used to combat cavalry. I didn't know what their sabres were made of or if they were effective. Nevertheless, it appeared that people used those sorts of weapon to fight with anthropoids in this era, so there shouldn't be any problems.

Tanya rode ahead alone. She had almost reached the plains. She looked particularly small when she faced off against the horde of anthropoids. They noticed the small figure charging toward them. A few of them armed with stone axes charged toward her while roaring.

It was a really "cute" scene. Despite riding on her horse, Tanya still wasn't as tall as the anthropoids. The anthropoids roared while charging toward her. They swung their axe violently toward Tanya's head.

Tanya hopped up onto her horse, and then vaulted high up, using her horse as a platform. Her horse's head was splattered by the axe before it dropped to the ground heavily. Tanya slashed at the anthropoids with her long sword. She dexterously flashed between two anthropoids comparably to a swallow. Her blade resembled two ice picks slashing between them. Tanya landed the next instant, while the anthropoids had been cut in two, with their torso and lower body separated. Their organs and blood sprayed forth as their heavy axes dropped to the ground.

Tanya then moved again. She raised the long sword in her hand and charged toward the anthropoid, roaring as he ran toward her. She threw her sword at him, where it stabbed straight through him. She then drew her short sword and a small axe. She dashed to the anthropoid as if she was a gust of wind. Despite him being tall and large, he was just a large sheep before her. He swung his axe down at her, but couldn't even nip her cloak. Her small axe and sword flashed passed him, cutting his throat open with absolute precision.

There was nobody who could stop Tanya's onslaught!

Tanya rushed to an anthropoid that was riding something similar to a wild boar, or maybe it was a wolf. The anthropoid blankly watched the white gust of



wind charge toward him; Tanya leapt onto his head before he could even shout.

“I shall take thy head with my father’s blade!”

Tanya grabbed his hair with one hand. Her small and sharp axe resembling a wolf’s fang shined as it swung through the air beautifully, yet indifferently. Next second, she was completely covered in the blood that spurted out.

She threw his head onto the ground. Tanya stood atop his shoulders. It was the first time terror surfaced in the eyes of the anthropoids.

“Now... Who’s next?”

Tanya licked the blood at the corner of her mouth as she coldly stared down the anthropoids.

That’s when I suddenly felt that Tanya was more savage than the anthropoids...

## Ch. 37

“Tanya!”

After Tanya killed their commander, I led a heavy assault, causing the anthropoids to flee. I didn’t pursue them; instead, I dismounted to grab Tanya’s shoulder, as she was going to go after them.

Tanya looked at me, feeling slightly surprised, but she didn’t say anything; instead, she lowered her head with a nonchalant look.

“Your Majesty, Tanya is Socina City’s hero, please do not...”

“Don’t speak right now, Karana.”

I had no idea how violent my expression looked, but I saw Karana take two steps back, with a terrified look on her face. That made me realise just how frightening the expression I just looked at Tanya with was.

I took in a deep breath to ease my expression. I looked at Tanya and stroked her cheek, only to end up getting my hand covered in blood. I sighed, and then raised her small head up. Tanya resembled a doll that let me do as I pleased.

She looked at me with her lifeless eyes. She didn't show the disappointment or mellowness that I was worried she'd be feeling.

Perhaps she has no other thoughts other than to kill the anthropoids.

She was more similar to a machine than a kid.

I wiped the blood off her face without saying anything. I just wiped away the blood that covered her face. Karana and Ling Yue looked at me strangely, but they didn't say anything, either. Tanya let me wipe the blood away until the end where she revealed a confused expression after.

"Sorry, I was too aggressive with you just now."

I stroked her head under her hat and sighed. I said, "How should I put it? You are, indeed, Socina City's hero, since you broke the siege on the city, but... you can't charge forward the way you did. If you failed to kill them and got in danger, what are we going to do? Your father entrusted you to me, so I can't let something happen to you when we've just gotten together. You are very brave; that said, you need to learn to protect yourself when you act on your bravery."

With my hand on her head, Tanya softly replied, "I just want to kill anthropoids."

"You need to protect yourself when you kill as well. You're no longer yourself anymore. Since your father entrusted you to me; you're my soldier now, my Tanya. You must protect yourself. That way, you can be of more assistance to me."

"I'm just a tool..."

Tanya raised her head and looked at me with an odd look. She softly explained, "My parents were killed by the anthropoids... I was adopted since I was young. I need to kill anthropoids. I need to kill them. They were the ones who destroyed my family. They destroyed us. I must kill all of them..."

I stroked Tanya's head and responded, "You'll get to kill enough of them if you follow me, Tanya. However, I need you to live to do that. I shall now give you your first command as your current commander. Your order is to make sure you learn to protect yourself. You are not to charge before I give the command. But I also promise to give you the chance to get revenge. I'll give you lots and lots of

opportunities. I'll let you kill more and more anthropoids."

Tanya seemed to feel a bit puzzled. She looked up at me with an odd gaze and replied, "I don't understand the point of that order. Your Majesty... I just want to kill anthropoids. I don't care about whether I live or not... I..."

"I care!"

I gave Tanya's head a firm rub. I crouched down and looked into her eyes with sincerity. I explained, "But I care! You're my Tanya. If you die for a pointless kill, I'll be very sad. You're my Tanya. Your life belongs to me from now on, and so, I won't let you waste your value."

"... Understood, Your Majesty. I will not do that again."

Tanya looked into my eyes. An incomparably complex gaze appeared in her eyes for the first time. I nodded then stood up. Somebody then suddenly tugged my cloak.

I turned around to see Tanya grabbing my cloak with a light grip. She softly apologised, "Sorry..."

"Uhm, it's all right."

I lingered for a moment, and then scrubbed Tanya's head with a smile. She shuddered then held onto my cloak without letting go.

I looked at Ling Yue. She had kept silent the entire time. She lowered her head to look at the corpses on the ground and spaced out. The anthropoids didn't put up much of a resistance, but they did leave behind a field of corpses.

Ling Yue looked at the corpses in silence. I walked up behind her and patted her on her shoulder. I asked, "What's wrong, are you a little sad?"

"Uhm."

It was the first time Ling Yue responded so docilely. She looked at the corpses all around with a sad look. She softly said, "There was no way I would ever have interacted with these lowly anthropoids; but, they are my companions, living on the same continent, nonetheless. Now, however, they want to kill me, while I also want to kill them... This feeling really... really makes me feel uncomfortable."

“I don’t know what happened on that side, and you won’t tell me what happened, but what I see is them trying to kill you and invade my land. That makes them my enemy. Since they want to bring war to my land, I’ll be sure to take the war back to them.”

I looked at Ling Yue and solemnly said, “They’re no longer your companions. They’re now your enemy; therefore, you don’t need to show any pointless kindness. Ling Yue, I’ve always wanted to ask you something.”

“What?”

Ling Yue turned her head. There was a hint of sadness in her eyes. She looked as though she was particularly small in the moment despite her usual proud and conceited self. She resembled a young girl, who got abandoned at a department store, with the massive department store behind her. She’d be standing in the ground shaking, but was too small for anyone to notice.

I looked at her and asked, “Are you willing to help me?”

She looked up at me with a dumbstruck look. Her long ears shook, and then in a shaky voice, asked, “What did you say?”

I looked at her and replied in a serious tone, “I said, are you willing to help me? I want to get revenge. I want to go to the North. I need a map. I need to know the races there. I need to know much more, and then more. You hold that information, so I want to ask you to help me with all sorts of things.”

Ling Yue looked at me. Tears slowly formed in her eyes. She looked at me with her crescent-moon eyes. She suddenly extended her hands out and grabbed my collar. She thumped my chest with her head as she sobbed, “Please... help me... I want to return. I want revenge... I will provide you with my knowledge, my body, my soul... I can give you everything, but please... I beg you... Let me get revenge... Let me avenge my father... Let me avenge my tribesmen...”

I looked at her and sincerely responded, “I guess it’s a deal, then. You provide me with your knowledge, your body and soul. I’ll avenge you, and give you to the revenge you want, and I’ll avenge your family.”

“Uhm!”

Ling Yue nodded then released my collar. Her reliable confidence and pride

was restored to her red eyes, “Let’s go with that, then. I’ll give everything of mine to you, and you must give me the revenge I deserve.”

“Uhm, promise.”

## Ch. 38

We still ended up arriving a little too late.

Karana and I looked at the Lord’s palace, where black smoke was twirling into the sky above. When the anthropoids attacked the palace, they threw flammables inside, igniting a big fire. The guards tasked with security were fighting at the city walls, while the people were hiding in their own homes trembling, leaving the palace there to burn until there was nothing left to burn.

“Sorry...”

I didn’t know what to say, but I saw Karana who was next to me in pain, so I felt that I had to say something.

Karana gripped my arm tightly and forced herself to stay on her feet. Her body trembled as her tears coursed down her face. She spoke in a shaky voice, “It’s all gone... It’s all gone... My husband and my things... They’re all gone... all gone... Everything is gone... The snow sculptures... The books... They’re all gone... all gone...”

“It’s all right; it’s all right. You’ll be able to get your notes and whatnot again. I’ll share them with you again whenever you want!”

“But my husband’s and my memories are all gone!!”

Karana shouted toward the ground and wailed loudly. She cried as she looked at the black smoke twirling up into the air. The big fire melted the sculptures and the books had been burnt. Those were the only things Karana had remaining. Those were the only things that she could rely on to reminiscence. She lived here, because there were traces of her husband having once been here, as well as her memories of him.

Now, however, they were no more.

“Your Majesty... you are different... Your story with your wives has a future... but I... This is all I have... But they are all gone now... They are all gone now... and I will never have them again... If I forget him, not even my husband will remain...”

Karana sat on the ground and curled her fingers up against the ground. The broken fragments on the ground almost caused all of her fingers to bleed. She looked up; her purple eyes were filled with an intense murderous aura. It was my first time seeing her reveal such an aggressive expression. She looked to the North where the anthropoids fled. She clenched her teeth and shouted, “Socina shall never forgive the anthropoids! I swear on my name, Karana Dominique Von Testersmill, and the honour of my family that I will definitely annihilate the anthropoids in the North! I will annihilate them! The anthropoids destroyed my husband’s and my most cherished memories. I will make them pay with their blood!!”

“Karana...”

“Your Majesty!”

I just called out to her, but Karana spun around and looked at me with such a fierce gaze that I was almost frightened. She whipped her now somewhat messy hair while keeping her gaze on me. She then very aggressively shouted, “Your Majesty, please accept my request. I want to get revenge, as well. I also want to destroy the horde of anthropoids in the North. Socina will provide everything it can to help whether that is manpower or provisions. I can even give you myself as long as you can avenge me!”

“I can do that, but... I just want to know why you all have to add yourself into the list. Am I that sort of person to you?!”

“You misunderstand, Your Majesty. It is just that when a woman reaches a dead end, her body becomes her last capital for living on. If it really comes down to it, it is nothing to be ashamed of.” Karana looked at me and went on sternly, “I am not lying. I will do my absolute best to do what you ask as long as you can help me get revenge. I am able to be here today thanks to my husband, but my most precious treasures have been destroyed, so there is nothing that I am unwilling to sacrifice now!”

“Even if I do make your wish a reality, I won’t ask for your body!” I scratched my head and sighed. I then continued, “I, actually, am the one who should be most concerned; but nonetheless, since you’ve both given me such heavy responsibilities, it’s dampened my concerns. However, Karana, I promise that I will definitely help you, not just to avenge you, but also to protect the people and territory of mine that I want to protect.”

Philes rode his horse over at a fast speed. He looked at me and reported, “Your Majesty, the guard unit is ready, and so are your new soldiers.”

“Good.”

I nodded then looked at Karana, “Lord Karana, I shall take my leave now then. A major incident has happened, so please forgive me for changing my schedule. I must rush back to Troy City now.”

“Please wait a moment, Your Majesty.”

Karana suddenly grabbed me. I looked at her, feeling somewhat puzzled. She took in a deep breath and declared, “I shall follow you. I have nothing here anymore. I cannot tolerate looking at these ruins and doing nothing! I must do something to get my revenge even if this is the last thing I do!”

“You want to come with me?”

“Yes. I want to go with you to the North. I want to *personally* plant the victory flag in the North before returning to Socina. Only that way can I face my husband’s grave!”

Karana’s gaze was particularly serious and firm as rock. I didn’t think I’d be able to stop her regardless of what I said. Karana deeply loves her late husband. She even dared to refuse a marriage proposal from the royal family for him. I fully believe that such a woman would even take to the battlefield for her husband just as Nier and Lucia, who both fought Alice that night, in spite of their poor conditions.

Nobody can stop a woman’s affirmative love. Nothing can.

“It’ll very dangerous, you know?”

“I will protect myself. I will not make you protect me and distract you!”

“I’m not worried about being distracted. I’m just reminding you to not do something rash for revenge.”

I turned around and mounted the horse Philes led over. I added, “Karana, pack your stuff. Come to the city doors once you’re done packing. We’ll wait for you there.”

“Will you not object?”

“Would my objection work?”

We gave each other a smile. Karana stood up, and then headed in the direction that she needed to go with a resolute mentality. I didn’t know who she was going to look for or what she was going to do, but I believed that we’d definitely meet her at the city door if we waited for her there.

“Your Majesty... we are going to battle. Would there not be problems if we brought Lord Karana along?”

“Aren’t I the same as her?” I then chuckled and explained, “I can’t do anything, either. I rely on you guys to protect me, as well. That said, you, too, should be aware that Karana won’t stop now. She’ll probably form her own team to attack them even if I reject her. Socina City might be a station we can use as our frontline base for attacking. With Karana with us, it’ll be easier to negotiate things.”

In a concerned tone, Philes asked, “Do you think... Troy City is in danger?”

I looked in the direction of Troy city and clenched my teeth, “I don’t know. Troy City best be fine. My wives and mom are all there. I must guarantee their safety. They’re the most important to me, as well as the people I love most... It’s my turn... to protect my moms this time!”

=====

Current time at Troy City...

“The elves have entered a harsh battle, as well.”

Elizabeth threw the letter in her hand into the basin of fire. She lied down sideways on the bed and cleared her throat softly before giving her orders, “Send Lucia and Nier... mm... and Freya to the Royal Capital. They are the most



important people to my son. If something happens to them, I won't be able to stand my son's tears."

A Valkyrie looked at Her Majesty, "Your Majesty, the enemy is estimated to arrive at the city around tonight. Our army has just left, and hence, require some time to return. We should just retreat for now. Your safety is what is truly most important! It matters not if we abandon this city, as it is not suited for a defensive battle. The land is flat, and it's only combat force is its militia!"

The Empress chuckled. She looked at her and responded, "This is my son's city. This city's name is Troy City. I abandoned my son once ten years ago, and you want me to abandon him again?! I will never do that! This city doesn't just have militia. There's all of you and me! I'm right here inside my son's city! I'm not taking a single step back! This is Troy City! It is blissful for me to die in my son's city!"

"Your Majesty..."

"I, myself, will fight just as I did in the past. As long as it has to do with my son, I shall never abandon it. Never!"

## Ch. 39

"Your Majesty!"

Nier stopped Elizabeth while anxiously looking at her.

Elizabeth looked at Nier with surprise, "Nier? Didn't I arrange to have you leave already? Why are you still here? Hurry and leave. This place will soon become a battlefield."

"How can I leave, then, Your Majesty?! I am also a Valkyrie! I shall stay, too!"

Elizabeth looked at her and sternly replied, "You no longer are! You were once a Valkyrie. If it was back then, I would be very happy to see you stay, but you're now the Royal Princess! You can't even fit into your Valkyrie uniform with your body anymore, can you?! You're carrying the future of the Empire in your body. How can I let you stay in the most dangerous place?!"

Nier looked at Elizabeth and clenched her teeth. In a loud voice, she exclaimed, “This is my husband’s home! Your Majesty! This is His Majesty’s city! This is his and my home! He will definitely come back! He definitely will! I do not want for him to not be able to see me when he returns. This is our home. As his wife, I must wait for my husband here! I insist on staying!”

“It’s very dangerous, Nier!” Elizabeth pressed her hands on Nier’s shoulders. She met with her eyes and said, “Nier, this isn’t a battle that must be won. This city isn’t suited for a defensive fight, and there aren’t enough men here. It’s very dangerous to stay here. Are you sure you want to stay?”

Nier looked back at Elizabeth and responded in a voice of determination, “I must stay. I am His Majesty’s wife; I must wait for his return. I must! Lucia and Freya will not leave, either. We will all stay here. We all want to wait for His Majesty to return. I am his wife. I will not flee on my own. I will definitely stand by his side no matter how dangerous it is!”

“Nier...”

“I think Nier is right. I don’t think they’ll be able to run now, after all.”

Elizabeth looked over to the palace entrance to see Lorana carrying her sword. She had changed out of her usual work clothes and wore on an elven battle uniform. She swung her long sword in a circle then laughed, “I failed to protect His Majesty in the desert last time and got injured before I could. That stung my pride. I’m the number one Sword Saint of the continent, yet I couldn’t show His Majesty how skilled I am. This time, I won’t let you down. Although I’m not an expert at city defences, I just need to butcher the punks that climb up, right?”

“Uhm, but I have no experience fighting anthropoids. Teacher, do you have any ideas?”

“I don’t know, either, but I imagine they won’t be able to live if you behead them, pierce their heart or dismember their limbs even if they are anthropoids, right?” Lorana then snickered and continued, “I’ve got a large volume of gun powder and guns, too. Even if the anthropoids come with their big team, I’ll show them what firepower is!”

=====

“Esteemed Queen, our first team has arrived in the southern lands already. The humans and elves did not react in time, thereby allowing our first team to wear them down.”

Nobody expected the anthropoids to be skilled artisans. Despite being in the desolate North, behind the monarch’s palace was a structure that resembled a sword that pierced the sky. Behind the gothic buildings and white stone material were the white snowy mountains, making them look larger.

At this moment, sitting inside was an anthropoid dressed in an exquisite long robe, was passing a document toward the Queen, who was behind the black veil.

However, the Queen didn’t take it, because the anthropoid was just putting on a show. He put the document back on the round table, where eight anthropoids dressed in robes were sitting at.

“It looks as though our campaign South is ninety-percent likely to succeed now. Our main forces are on their way now. As long as we can hold the elves and humans, the South shall fall once our main forces arrive. Your hometown will soon be returned to you, My Queen.”

“Yes. This is all thanks to your wise decisiveness, My Queen!”

Though they said that, they all wore belittling smiles of mockery. There was no response from behind the black veil. It was as though nobody was there, and the anthropoids were merely speaking to an imaginary figure as they played House.

“So then, My Queen, please await the good news from the frontlines. With our wise general and brave soldiers, your home is within reach now.”

The anthropoids got up and turned around to leave the ruler’s palace without even bowing, leaving nothing but silence and a black veil that budged a little.

Movement suddenly came from behind the black veil. The Queen swept the black veil open with one hand, revealing her beautiful face as she let out a heavy sigh. She sat weakly in her gold throne, making her appear akin to a cloth doll that was misplaced.

A tall young girl with long ears walked in. She looked at the Queen sitting on

the throne in a daze with her blood-red eyes. She made a respectful bow and said, “My Queen, has your meeting ended? Your dinner has been prepared. Please come with me.”

“Leah...”

The Queen looked at her with gold eyes and reached her hand out. Leah lingered for a moment before revealing a nervous smile. She placed her hand behind her and softly said, “My Queen, my... my... my hand is a bit dirty... so I think it is best not to... Ah... My Queen! This... this...”

The young girl froze in place because the Queen had hugged her tightly. She went completely red in the face, thereby resembling a ripe tomato, while her excited eyes shook. She didn’t know if she should hug the Queen back...

The Queen gently rubbed her face against the young girl’s face. The Queen then let out a heavy sigh, “Only you... You are the only one... around me that still considers me the Queen ... I didn’t want to start this war at all. I want to go home, but this was not how I wanted to do it. I... I didn’t want to... but I’m useless... I don’t have any authority. I’m just a puppet Queen...”

“You are not! My Queen! You are the Queen, the ruler of the North! You could save me, so you can save the entire North, as well!”

“But the only one I trusted... the only tribe I trusted... is no more...”

The Queen shuddered. The young girl hesitated for a moment before hugging the Queen around her waist. Next to her ear, she solemnly said, “Not yet, My Queen. The Moon Fox tribe has not yet been completely exterminated. They still have one last survivor who is their last hope. Miss Ling Yue, who has the most pure mana, is not dead yet. She must have left. She is, definitely, still alive. I am certain of it.”

“Can their tribe still save me... and the North...?”

“They can! They absolutely can! The Moon Fox tribe has never disappointed us after all these centuries and millennia! I believe in them, and you must believe in them, as well, My Queen. Ling Yue will definitely save us! She will definitely save the North! She definitely will!”

“But... I really... want to go home... I don’t want... I really don’t want... to die in

this desolate place... as my ancestors did again. I want to go home... I want to return to the south..."

"You will return... I... I will definitely do my best... I will ensure you get to go home, I promise!"

## Ch. 40

“You’re saying that your race’s power was required to survive in the North?”

I looked at the ears moving back and forth in front of me. I was a little reluctant to believe that the young girl was the saviour of the entire North, or otherwise, the sun of the entire North.

The environment in the North is incomparably harsh precisely because the mana spring doesn’t reach them anymore. However, Ling Yue’s race used their own powers to allow the races in the North to survive. No, no, no, I made a mistake there, allow me to correct myself. Ling Yue’s Moon Fox tribe used their mana to sustain the environment in a way that would allow the elves exiled there to survive.

“That’s right. We were there in the North to begin with. At the time, our race ruled the North and the anthropoids weren’t the way they are now. We had our own culture and civilisation. In fact, we weren’t too far behind you. Afterwards, the anthropoids were impacted by the environment in the North. As a result, our family offered our mana, sacrificing our lives to warm up the North. That allowed the surviving anthropoids and exiled elves to survive. Although it became considerably more difficult, we did survive, fortunately.”

Ling Yue retold her race’s past with pride, which was reflected by her ears twitching with excitement.

“So, who rules the North now?”

“An elf rules as the Queen. With that said, the elves in the North are no longer like you anymore. Their skin is slightly whiter than yours. Their ears are long, while you no longer have the long ears of elves.”

“Wait... wait... let’s put the ears matter aside for now... I want to know why an elf rules, when your race maintained the entire North.”

“Because the elves performed very well when they first joined our alliance with the anthropoids. At the time, the elves’ ruler was very wise. Though we could maintain the North, it was the leader of the elves that came up with the

suggestions to lay the foundations for the survival of the anthropoids, as well as the future. As such, we pledged our allegiance to them. Our relationship with the elves at the time was also very good. We are where we are now thanks to our determination and unity during the toughest era.”

“So in other words, the plan to invade the South was the elves’ request? And they killed your entire tribe? And they no longer want the North, or is this a last stand?”

It’s pardonable if the elves of the past invaded the South, since their goal would be to, one, get revenge and two, return home. If that was the case, though, they wouldn’t have any enmity with humans, since they didn’t have any connection at the time.

I presume Socina got dragged into this, because it was in the anthropoids’ way. The anthropoids didn’t care if Socina had any value in the war. They merely wanted to destroy it.

However, if the elves in the North don’t just want to simply return home, then they must want to attack the humans in the South, as well. After all, if I was in their shoes, I wouldn’t choose to just return home. If I could defeat the elves, I’d want to try defeating humanity, too.

Of course, I’ll fight them no matter the case, as not only am I the Prince of elves, but also the Prince of humanity.

“So, what do the elves in the North want? Do they want revenge or land in the South? Also, why did they try to kill you? Did you oppose the idea?”

“No, right now... How shall I say this...? While there is a Queen in the North, she can’t actually do anything. Everything is determined by the discussions between the eight anthropoid elders. Therefore, this war wasn’t started by the Elven Queen... The Elven Queen just mentioned that she wanted to return home one time, and then those eight elders launched a war.”

She sadly lowered her long ears. I looked at her silently, and then grabbed her hand. Her hand jolted. She didn’t hold my hand back. I don’t know why, but if she kept recounting things, then she was going to have to mention her tribe’s massacre next. It can’t be nice for a girl to speak of the wound in her heart repetitively at this point time.

“If you don’t want to talk about it, you don’t have to...”

Ling Yue shook her head resolutely and then went on, “No, I need to talk about it. If sharing this with you can allow me to get my revenge, then I must tell you. This is nothing to be ashamed of. This is my vengeance! Continuing on... Our tribe and the Queen didn’t accept this war, but the Queen had lost power, while the crazed anthropoid army was controlled by the eight elders. The Queen was very worried that a war would break out, and thus, discussed with my father how to eliminate the eight of them... But their plan was discovered, and so the eight killed massacred my entire tribe. My father and a few guards escorted me to escape... But nevertheless, none of the guards survived... If you didn’t save me, I would probably be dead right now...”

Ling Yue may be very strong, but I could still feel her hand tremble.

I touched her head then softly said, “You’re already very strong. Ling Yue, you truly are already very strong...”

“It’s pointless, though... I just want revenge...”

I held her hand and next to her ear, gently said, “But you need to be strong to have the courage to take revenge, so you’re incredible. You’re an adult who can now carry the weight of a tribe.”

Her long ears twitched. I felt as though her fingers moved in my hands, but she didn’t hold my hand in the end.

*‘It seems that she’s still vigilant of me. We’ve only met for a few days, after all.’*

Ling Yue isn’t Nier or Lucia, either. As a young lady, who’s proud and feels honoured by her tribe, she wouldn’t give me her heart just because I saved her. Further, Ling Yue is currently focused purely on vengeance and hatred for the North. I must be nothing more than her hope to get her vengeance right now.

“I just know that the last thing my father said to me was to run to the South and inform the elves and humans of the anthropoids incoming attack. He told me to then go and find the Galadriel tribe. He said that if you knew that the elves in the North survived, then you would definitely come over and end the twisted rule.”



I now understood why Ling Yue got so emotional upon finding out I'm a Galadriel.

*'By the sounds of things, Ling Yue's tribe is aware of what exactly happened in the south back then.'*

She lowered her ears a little. I must say, Ling Yue's mood is really easy to read. You don't read her mood by examining her gaze and smile. You just need to watch her ears and tail. It was as though she couldn't control her changes.

I nodded then replied, "I have a decent understanding of what exactly happened now. As for the specifics of the anthropoids tactics and numbers, share that information with my mom when we get to Troy City. There's not much point telling me about it now. In summary, I need to know lots of things, as I don't know a thing about the North."

Ling Yue sniffled, "All right..."

I held her hand tightly and looked to the North. It was now night time.

*'I remember there was a village up ahead. We rested there when we went to Socina, so let's rest there again on this trip back.'*

*'It's very dangerous to move, when we're not certain if it's safe.'*

"Your Majesty, that village is up ahead. Let us head over to it."

"All right."

## Ch. 41

The village ahead is so small that it virtually isn't visible on the map. There are only about a dozen families residing there. It was a most ordinary village, where they focus on agriculture for three seasons and handiwork in the winter. This village can be considered our rest station. There wasn't even a hotel there. We just set up tents at the plaza in the centre of the village for the night.

When we arrive, the villagers would hang around us and drink with us – although the drinks were drinks that we brought. They'd chat with us and listen

to all of the stories of the world outside of their village. They would listen in keenly even if it was just the soldiers bragging. This village was far away from every other place. Maybe the villagers here were bound to live here for eternity. The only way for them to hear about the outside world was, therefore, through the stories that we shared even if they happened to be fake stories.

This place was no different to any other small village. The outside of the village and the villagers were in no way different. Nothing from the air to the water was different.

I suddenly tugged on my horse reins. Ling Yue's ears stood up. She leaned onto my body, feeling slightly afraid and remarked, "I smell blood..."

"Yeah, I smell it, too."

I pulled my gun out from behind as I responded in a quiet voice. All of my guards had noticed the irritating stench of blood, as well. They drew their blades and lit their fire torches up. We had arrived at the entrance of the village, which is the place we last left.

In addition to the stench of blood, there was the smell of burnt things. We couldn't see the smoke ascending to the sky, since it was night time. The sparks inside the village weren't candles of homes inside the village, but the sparks after wood was burnt!

"Hurry into the village!"

I gave a simple command. Tanya, who was next to me, charged forward. Philes and Shusia ordered their people to circle around and surround the village.

We don't know how many enemies are in the village. If we just rush in all together, we might get caught in an ambush. That's why my guards will always split into three teams when entering villages. One team enters while the other two teams circle around to the sides.

We quickly rode into the village and saw the burnt buildings. All of the buildings in the small village had been burnt.

*'Judging from the appearance of the village, it must've been burnt ages ago, thereby leaving only sporadic sparks behind.'*

The closer we got to the centre, the more prominent the stench of blood became. We stopped in the centre of the village plaza. We raised our fire torches up, and I immediately used my hand to cover Ling Yue's eyes as soon as I saw the scene.

"Hey! Hey! Hey! What are you doing?! What are you doing?!"

"I think it's best that you don't look..."

I took in a deep breath to suppress my anger and rage that I wanted to belt out. I looked at the pillar erected in the plaza and almost crushed my gun handle with my left hand.

Ling Yue aggressively pulled my hand away. She was intending to thunder at me, but the scene before her made her cry out, "Aaahh!"

She then retreated, smashing straight into my chin.

"I told you that it was best that you didn't look."

*'This is no pillar.'*

*'This is pillar made from human limbs and heads.'*

*'There isn't a single corpse that's intact.'*

The blood came from here.

The fire had gone out, while the blood continued to seep out from here.

I looked at the pillar in front of me. They all wore terrified expressions. Not one of them had their eyes closed.

The anthropoids don't use sharp weapons. They use blunt weapons. All of their dismembered limbs were badly damaged.

*'Just how much torment and pain did these people suffer before they died?'*

I shut my eyes. I could seemingly still hear the cries and sobs in this village at the time. I could see the dark silhouettes running rampant inside the village, dragging the people here and then smashing them into all sorts of deformed shapes with their stone axes as they accompanied their bashes with their laughter.

My guards fell silent. I didn't say anything, either. I just looked on silently.

Only Ling Yue's sobs coming from in front of me could be heard.

"Your Majesty..."

Karana broke the silence. She grabbed my arm tightly. She looked at my face with concern and asked, "Are you all right...? You... You..."

"Ah, I'm fine."

I took in a deep breath.

*'I don't know why I'm calming down now.'*

I tugged on my horse reins and commanded, "Dig a grave, bury these villagers' corpses and erect a tombstone for them. Make it quick. If this village was attacked, then Troy City is probably in danger, too."

"... Roger!"

After a moment of silence, my guards began to carry out my order, cleaning up the corpses and digging a hole. I watched my guards work in silence.

*'How strange. I'm not even shedding a tear.'*

Ling Yue, who was leaning on my chest, wiped her tears and sobbed, "Sorry..."

I gave her a simple response, "It's not your fault."

"No... We're anthropoids, too... I'm to blame, as well..."

"Your tribe did everything that they could. This isn't your fault."

## Ch. 42

Fortunately, what I was most worried about didn't happen to Troy City. We arrived back at Troy City at daytime. Troy City was already under martial law when we arrived. The fields outside of the city had been abandoned. Everybody should be inside the city right now. The city doors were shut tight, only opening for soldiers riding on horses with orders.

The city wall guards lowered the drawbridge when they saw us return. I led everyone into Troy City and rushed into the palace with them before catching

my breath. The Valkyries were fully equipped and on guard around the perimeter of the palace now. They forbade anybody from coming and going as they pleased. It was basically the same scene you would see during wartime.

After dismounting at the stables, I left the new soldiers with Philes to organise and have a rest at the army barracks. I don't think I'll be staying in the city for too long. Based on what Ling Yue told me, the elves in the North are in the stricken zone. I confirmed that my Troy City was safe and sound. I'll need to go north to see Mommy Vyvyan next, then. The elves will definitely be worn out from having to fend off so many anthropoids. I need to go and assist.

Additionally, I need to bring the Earth Dragons we've trained back here. It's been a while, so the Earth Dragon Riders need to train again, and ensure that they can still ride them.

"Tanya, Ling Yue, come with me."

Tanya appeared to be a little afraid due to the scenery she had never seen before, so she grabbed onto my cape. Ling Yue, who was standing next to me, commented, "Is this your nest? It doesn't look too shabby..."

"I am the Prince, after all."

I led the two of them into the palace and went straight to the conference room. Gerald, who was standing at the door, hesitated and looked at me with disbelief. He exclaimed, "Your Majesty?! You are back?!"

"Ah, yeah. How can I not come back when something so serious happened?"

I pushed the door open with one hand. I heard the voices of Freya and the person in charge of the militia wearing a cloak.

*'Freya is probably examining the city defence blueprint.'*

Without looking up she shouted, "Get out! I'm discussing the city defences right now. Nobody is to disturb us. Gerald, are you deaf or stupid? Didn't I say not to allow anybody to enter?! I said... Onii-sama?!"

I chuckled as I looked at Freya's stunned gaze, "You'll get wrinkles if you're so agitated, Freya."

"Onii-sama!!"

Freya flipped the table over and leapt over to me. I held her small body in my embrace tightly while she hugged me tightly with a smile.

“All right now. Freya, I don’t intend to stay for long. I’m so glad to see Troy City safe and sound.”

I released Freya, and she sensibly released me, as well, to adjust her clothes. She looked at me again, but with her usual calm and polite smile this time. She said, “Uhm, we have indeed received reports of enemies approaching, but they have not attacked us, yet. In addition, our reinforcements are on their way. We should be able to stop the anthropoids with our defence structures and quantity of gun powder.”

“Got it. Thanks, Freya.”

I rubbed Freya’s head, and she giggled. If Freya had a tail, too, it would definitely be waving around similarly to a fan right now.

“Erm...”

Someone suddenly tugged on me from behind, thereby attracting Freya’s attention. Freya noticed Ling Yue and Tanya, who were with me. She looked at Ling Yue, feeling slightly surprised, but then she quickly shifted her gaze to Tanya, who was tugging on my cape. It’s said that animals possess warning signals that warn them of incoming hazards, leading to them concentrating all of their focus on threatening the largest animal...

“Onii-sama, these two are?”

“Ah, let me introduce you. This is the young girl of the Moon Fox Tribe that I found in Socina, Ling Yue. I’ll tell you about her when we have time in the future. Just know that we can trust her. This is Tanya, who has come to assist us. Tanya, this is Freya, my younger sister, who I am proud of most.”

Tanya looked at Freya in a somewhat vigilant manner. Freya, similarly, looked at Tanya with nothing but hostility. The two of them didn’t even greet each other. Tanya shifted behind me and avoided eye contact with her.

“Hehe...”

Freya raised her head again. The corner of her forehead twitched with anger.

She looked at me with an eerie smile. In a shaky voice, she said, "You sure do impress, Onii-sama. Everything comes in pairs for you. Two moms and two wives. Are you going to be having two younger sisters, too?"

"Huh?"

I couldn't quite catch on to what Freya was saying, but my ignorance seemed to anger her even further. She raised her hand up and gave me a slap. She then angrily turned around and exclaimed, "Onii-sama, you big idiot! You're a jerk, who easily gives your feelings away!! Go die!"

"Huh? What did I do? What did I do...?"

Freya pushed me out of the room, and I watched the door shut loudly, feeling completely ignorant as to what happened. Ling Yue, who was beside me, pursed her lips into a smile. She then looked at me and mocked me, "You have two wives when you don't understand a young girl's heart? How did you manage that? Were they innocent girls you kidnapped?"

"No! I'm not a dense guy. I understand girls' basic feelings. It's just that I have no clue as to why Freya is angry..." I sighed, and then added, "Forget it. Let's go. I still have other business. I'll apologise to her later."

Just when we turned around to leave, the door opened gently. Freya stood at the door and softly called out to me, "Onii-sama..."

I turned my head around to look at her. With a smile, I asked, "What's wrong, Freya?"

"Umm... umm... mm... promiscuous jerk... I... I... I should not have said that..." Freya bit down on her lips and lowered her eyes before continuing in a soft voice, "Do not die... Onii-sama... no matter what happens... Please... you must not... you must not die..."

"Ah, of course I won't. I know not to."

I smiled, and then turned around. I looked ahead and remarked, "There's no way I'll die. I still have you, my wives and my moms, so I can't die."

"Onii-sama... you are rotten to the core..."

Freya shut the door gently and left me with that weird line.

From behind, Ling Yue anxiously asked, “What do we have to do now? Shouldn’t we head straight to the elves?”

“Yes, but I need to see my wives and my mom first. It’ll be good if my wives are no longer here. By now, they should have already arrived at...”

“Ah! Your Highness!!”

I stood in the corridor, feeling dumbfounded. I looked at Lucia, who came running over at top speed. She tightly hugged me. I looked at her excited eyes, feeling baffled. I touched her face and asked, “Didn’t you and Nier go to the Royal Capital?”

“This is our home! How can we leave when you did not return yet?” Lucia giggled in my embrace, and then gently clasped my face. She then tilted her head and added, “You are here now. What need is there for us to run away with you here to protect us? We will always stay by your side. While you fight on the frontlines, we shall take care of you from the rear. We will never be scared as long as you are with us.”

## Ch. 43

“Let me introduce you. This is Ling Yue, the eldest daughter of the leader of the Moon Wolf Tribe. I will explain to you her background and whatnot when I have time in the future. But know that you can trust her. This is Tanya, who has come to assist us. She may be young, but she’s a great fighter and a good girl.”

Ling Yue looked at Nier and Lucia, feeling nervous. She made a small bow, “Hello, I am Ling Yue...”

“Hello.”

Lucia scanned Ling Yue with curiosity. She watched her ears twitch. I can sympathise with having an urge to touch those furry and pointy ears.

Nier, on the other hand, looked at Ling Yue with a very vigilant gaze. She stood to one side with her arms folded. She looked at me and asked, “Your Majesty, did you not go Socina to discuss the matter with the North? Why did



you bring a girl back?”

I looked back at Nier, chuckled softly and explained, “Ah, didn’t I tell you? When I was being pursued, Ling Yue saved me in the snowy mountains.

“Yeah...?”

Nier sighed as she looked at Ling Yue. She said, “Your Majesty, while this sounds slightly rude, your relationships between you as a male and other females are very messy. Putting Lucia aside, you and Luna were in a relationship, as well, weren’t you? Now you’ve got another woman with you. I am very worried now.”

“Am I that sort of man to you?!”

“Are you not?”

Nier glared at me, but then she tightly hugged me around my waist the next second and gently touched her forehead to mine. She softly said, “I still love you, though. If I wasn’t pregnant, I would definitely accompany you at your side, because I am your wife and bodyguard. Your safety is everything to me... but I can’t be by your side now, so you must protect yourself well. You must survive for my sake.”

I kissed Nier on her lips, and then hugged her tightly, “You, too. You’re my most beloved Nier, so you must look after yourself properly, as well.”

“Hey, you thief! I want one, too!”

Lucia pulled Nier away, and then shoved in to stand before me. She went up on her toes and closed her eyes. I grinned then looked at Nier, who was drumming up an angry look, before giving Lucia a kiss on her lips.

I hugged the two of them after, “I’ll be back; I promise. I’ll be back for your sakes and our children sake. I promise. So look after yourselves. It’s fine to leave Troy City if there’s danger. Troy City can be rebuilt, but there’s only one of you.”

“Uhm... You must look after yourself, Your Majesty.”

Lucia looked at Ling Yue, who was about as tall as her, and then with absolute confidence, declared, “Your Highness, I have faith in you. You will definitely be able to drive them away. You managed to defeat Earth Dragons nobody could

defeat, so the anthropoids are insignificant.”

I chuckled. Ling Yue is different to the anthropoids. I didn’t say anything though. Just as I went to turn around and leave, Nier grabbed my cape. As soon as I spun around, I felt a warm and gentle sensation on my lips. Nier gave me a wild kiss that consisted of half biting and half kissing.

After releasing me, she sternly said, “Don’t betray me... Your Majesty, if something happens while you are out, I will not forgive you!”

I stroked her face and replied, “I won’t. I won’t.”

“That best be the case, or else, that tail will become my scarf.”

Nier glanced at Ling Yue, causing Ling Yue to shudder. I’ll bet that was the first time that she had such an intense murderous gaze on her...

I laughed as I turned around. I responded, “Trust me, Nier. I need to go and see Her Majesty now.”

“Uhm, I love you, Your Majesty.”

“I love you, too.”

Lucia looked at me then came over. She gently hammer fisted me on my chest and sulked, “Your Highness... you forgot to tell me that you love me...”

“Uhm, I love you, Lucia.”

Lucia lingered for a moment before revealing a silly smile. She looked up and touched my face. She responded with a smile, “Uhm, I love you, too, Your Highness! I love you most!”

I touched Lucia on her forehead and teased her nose.

I finally left

From my side, Ling Yue said, “I never thought that your two wives would be so pretty... Though to be fair, you’re not ugly... That said, it’s not easy for them to deal with your blatant philandering. It’s fine for a man to have many wives, but it’s not easy for two girls, who are that pretty, to be willing to share their husband.”

I recalled all of the things that happened between the two of them and

grinned, “Yeah, their relationship isn’t bad.”

“How nice. My mother and aunt had a hostile relationship back then. Mom would always call that woman a thief, saying that she already had a child and yet still behaved improperly.” Ling Yue looked at the sky with a nostalgic attitude. She giggled before going on, “But in the end, Mom still took an attack for her. Mom said that she hated her most, and yet she still took a blow for her in the end...”

“...”

I didn’t speak. I just looked at Ling Yue. Although she wore a smile, her refusal to lower her head and her tail that stopped moving, gave away her true mood. I looked at her face. I reached my hand out and gently grabbed hold of one of her hands. Her fingers jerked. She then looked to me and giggled, “Aren’t you worried your wives will see you? I think that they’ll get angry for sure.”

“Because you’re crying.”

“I’m not!”

I lifted her hand up and placed it on her face. Her entire body shivered as she looked at the transparent tears on her fingertips. Her body began to subtly quiver as her tears coursed down her face quickly. She stood in place blankly as though she was still astonished that she was crying. I stood next to her while holding one of her hands, watching her cry.

“Why...? Why...?”

Ling Yue blankly looked at her tears. She murmured, “It’s been so long... I said I wouldn’t cry again... I’ve arrived here already, so why...? Why do my tears still uncontrollably fall when I mention the past...? Why...? I... I can’t be that weak anymore...”

I looked into her eyes and told her, “Tears are not weakness, Ling Yue. You’re here next to a Galadriel right now. I am the Galadriel who can save you and the North, so you don’t need to act tough in front of me. You can cry and let it all out when you speak of the past. Leave everything to me, Ling Yue...”

“No.” Ling Yue looked at me and cut me off. She looked at me and domineeringly whipped her tail. She took in a deep breath to stop her voice

from shaking. She shook her head, "Revenge is my business. My tribe is my tribe. You want me to be with you like your wives..."

"But, didn't you say that you'd give me everything of yours?"

I looked at her. I cut her resolution off and touched her ear.

***Slap!***

I blankly looked at the wall to the side. It was supposed to be a warm and romantic scene.

*'Why did I get slapped?'*

"Even if I said that, it doesn't mean that you can just touch my ears and tail as you please. And don't go thinking I'm the same as your wives, giving all of my desire for vengeance to you! I'm not that foolish sort of woman!!"

## Ch. 44

I looked at Elizabeth, who was examining the city defence blueprint in full gear, and called out to her from behind, "Mom."

"Ah, Son, you're back."

I was surprised that mom reacted very calmly. She smiled, "I knew you were back already. Troy City hasn't come under attack, yet. Karana has already told me what happened. By the looks of things, it seems that we're cleaning another mess that the elves left behind."

"Uhm. However, that doesn't mean that Troy City won't ever be attacked." I looked at the blueprint that Mom was examining and softly said, "When I came back, I saw a village that had been looted by the anthropoids."

Mom looked at my expression and asked, "It must've been very brutal, right?"

I clenched my teeth and gave an answered, "Uhm, very."

"An Emperor doesn't need to grief over the deaths of his people for long, for he needs to work hard for those alive." Mom gave me a pat on my shoulder, and then touched my face. She let out a soft sigh and added, "Mommy swears

that this time, Mommy will definitely support your attack on the North with all of the nation's power. These anthropoids shouldn't appear on our lands. Since they have appeared, I must make it so that they never appear here again."

I looked at Mom and gave her a nod. Mom smiled then tenderly clasped my face. She looked into my eyes, "But before that, Mommy needs to defend Troy City from harm for you. Mommy will not let this city fall."

"If it can't be defended... Mom, you can leave." I looked at the defence blueprint. Despite me being just a technician that never underwent military training under the military system, I could tell that Troy City, which was surrounded by flat plains, wasn't suited for a defensive battle. All siege weapons would be effective against the city. The river ran through the city horizontally; consequently, if they poisoned it or blocked it to drown us, Troy City would be doomed. Furthermore, there are no cities nearby Troy City to assist. Therefore, if we get caught in a siege, even soldiers will be hard-pressed to escape.

That's not to mention that we don't have an army in the city. The only defence force is the militia that I made undergo training once a week. They're basically just armed civilians. Their combat skills and their determination in battle are far inferior to a proper military's, let alone having them fight against the brutal anthropoids.

The only military team that can fight against the anthropoids are the Valkyries, but there are too few Valkyries in the city. They're struggling to defend the palace as is, so asking them to defend such a long city wall as well is unrealistic.

Honestly, I was very surprised to see that Troy City was still standing when I returned.

Mom dawdled. I quickly said, "Troy City isn't suited for defensive battles. It'll be very dangerous to fight a defensive battle here. We still have time to leave now, since the anthropoids have yet to gather outside the city. It'll be impossible to break out if we get caught in a siege, though. Mom, I'm very concerned about your safety. If you get hurt here... I... I will feel very guilty!"

Mom looked at me in silence. She neither agreed nor objected. I believe that

Elizabeth, who has been the God of Battle for a long time, comprehends the current predicament. In fact, she must know it better than I do. She must be aware of the chances of victory here and what the wise decision would be.

“Eighteen years ago, Mommy gave birth to you in that small village on a tattered bed. As a matter of fact, it was the elves that helped me deliver you. You were tiny back then. You had your eyes shut and appeared tiny. Your skin appeared transparent. You have no idea how blissful Mommy felt when Mommy held you back then. Mommy was worried about hurting you when Mommy gave you a kiss.”

Mom suddenly brought the past up from a decade ago. She spoke of things that I couldn't connect with on a realistic level. I looked at Mom with a blank look, clueless as to what she meant by that.

*‘I remember we were discussing the likelihood of being able to defend Troy City, not how I was when I was born.’*

Mom didn't look as though she had any intention of paying me any attention. She wore a blissful and shy smile. She looked ahead as if she could see the bliss that she felt eighteen years ago and the red cape used to wrap me up. She continued, “At the time, Mommy had no other thoughts on Mommy's mind. Mommy didn't think about eloping with your father, touring the entire continent or finding a beautiful place to build a home or any of those things. Mommy just thought about living on with you in Mommy's arms. Mommy didn't want to take one step away from you. Mommy just wanted to live somewhere peaceful and watch the cute and gentle you grow up.”

“Mom!”

“But, Mommy never thought...”

Mom interjected, and then stood up. She walked up to me and clasped my face tightly. She looked at my eyes with a hint of sadness in hers. She resumed, “Mommy ran; Mommy ran away and abandoned you, leaving you in an unknown place. Mommy abandoned you and left alone. That's why Mommy had to suffer for those last ten years. It's also why Mommy angers you over and over again. It's also why Mommy makes you feel hopeless. Mommy has always felt guilty and regretful. If Mommy didn't abandon you back then and kept you

by Mommy's side, if Mommy just beared with the extra bit of difficulty and fatigue, you wouldn't be suffering from the berserk mana condition. Luna wouldn't have died, and you wouldn't have gotten mad at Mommy for these things. Nothing that followed after that would've happened, either."

"Mom... what's the point of saying all this now?!"

Mom looked at me and raised her voice, "No! There's meaning to it!"

She spun around swiftly and hit me on my face. She looked at the blueprint again and sternly said, "Mommy abandoned you once. The pain, despair and betrayal Mommy suffered was rightesouly deserved punishment. Mommy will not abandon you again this time. This city's name is Troy City. It's your home. Son, this is your home. Mommy will not abandon you this time. Mommy will not watch the anthropoids trample on your home. Mommy doesn't have much time left to regret. Mommy will not back down this time. It would be a bliss for Mommy to die here, because Mommy didn't abandon you this time. Mommy didn't abandon Mommy's most beloved son!"

I looked at her, and she turned her head to look at me. Her eyes showed determination tougher than steel. Mom appeared as dominant as she did on the battlefield here.

*'This must be Elizabeth's form during wartime... This must be the heroic and dominant way Mom appeared in the war back then.'*

*'I might not be able to convince Mom to leave.'*

"Son, you should head to the elves now. The elves are the true gate that fend off the anthropoids. Vyvyan should be engaged in battle now. The elves will struggle with their numbers, if the anthropoids are leading a heavy assault. Mommy knows that you want to go to the elves at a time like this, so go. Mommy will definitely defend this place when you leave. Mommy will defend your home and your wives. Mommy should be protecting Mommy's child in the first place. This is the mission the gods have given Mommy. Mommy is finally able to do something Mommy should do. Mommy is very happy right now, honest."

Mom looked at me with a consoled, yet somewhat hopeless smile. Her voice was a little shaky and her gaze was complex to describe. There was affection,

determination and more than anything, yearning.

I couldn't resist the urge anymore. I walked over to Mom and hugged her. I clasped her face and kissed her.

The two of us tightly embraced. Mom didn't resist; she allowed me to hug her, and we clung to each other. She wrapped her arms around my waist and pulled me in tight.

*'Sorry, pops.'*

*'You can forgive me, right?! Surely you can forgive me, right?!'*

Mom's body was so gentle. The Empress that was always tough as steel, had a body as soft as Nier's.

She's just a woman, a wife and a mother.

"Mom..."

A moment after, I reluctantly let go of mom and took two steps back. I looked at her somewhat red face and wiped the corner of my mouth. I sincerely said, "Stay safe, Mom. I'll be back. I'll definitely be back to rescue you. Don't let anything happen to yourself before I return. If something happens to you, I'll be very sad. You wouldn't do something to make your son sad, would you?!"

"Uhm!"

Mom looked at me with a giggle and nodded.

"So wait for my return. You're my most important mom. I will definitely return to your side!"

I clenched my teeth to force myself to steel my heart. I turned around then went to the door and pulled it open.

"Oh, right... Mom, let me tell you one last time."

I suddenly stopped. I turned my head around to look at Mom, who reacted slightly surprised. I smiled and said, "Consider it the continuation of the mistake I made last time during the fireworks... Let me tell you again... I love you, too. I really do love you, too."

I didn't wait for mom's response; instead, I gently shut the door. If I continued



to look at her, I might not be able to find the determination to go to war.

*'I'll definitely return!'*

*'I will not allow my city, Troy City, to fall.'*

*'I will not let Troy City, the city that houses my mom, Nier, Lucia and Freya to fall!!'*

## Ch. 45

I looked at Tanya, who was beside me with her head down. With a smile I asked, "Tanya, what do you think of them? The people I introduced you to were all my family members."

Tanya looked up at me and replied with an expressionless look, "Nier... Lucia... very nice... Freya... no like."

I never imagined Tanya would be so prejudice against Freya. But that's normal, since Freya didn't give her a good impression, after all. I don't know why Freya randomly threw a fit back there, either. It's, therefore, normal for Tanya to not like her, but Freya and Tanya are both important to me. The two of them need to learn to get along.

I scrubbed Tanya's head and said, "Freya isn't a bad person. She's just a girl. Needless to say, she's very important to me, as well, so you must get along.

"Don't like... hate her."

Tanya ignored everything I said. She stood firm in her stance against Freya. I sighed.

*'I'll let them sort it out between themselves. Nier and Lucia weren't friendly with each other, initially, but they're basically friendly now. I believe the two will get along after spending more time together.'*

That's the future, though. Right now, I need to head to the elven lands. Normally speaking, the journey there is absolutely safe, so safety isn't an issue. When I returned to the elves from humanity's lands, there was a chance Lucia

would be waiting for me at the entrance, as well.

This time, however, the once open entrances were now virtually all closed. The atmosphere on all of the remaining routes was very tense. The guards were prepared for war. I wondered how many more soldiers were lying in ambush in the forest, but I strongly believed the elves wouldn't fail.

Mommy Vyvyan is there with the elves. No anthropoid will be able to break through her defences given her demi-god powers.

"Are we going to go and see the true Galadriel now?"

Ling Yue was slightly excited.

I was honestly curious as to what she, a resident of the North, thought of the Galadriel tribe that cut off their mana supply. Under normal circumstances, the Galadriel tribe should be considered the source of their suffering, the tribe that destroyed the stability in the North, and the accomplices that killed her tribesmen. But then, it appears as though Ling Yue has considered the Galadriel tribe to be a noble tribe ever since she was young.

The noble act of the Galadriel tribe can be fairly considered a disaster for the North.

"I am a true Galadriel. Didn't I tell you my surname was Galadriel Rosvenor?"

If I'm not mistaken, Ling Yue just said something very rude...

Ling Yue whipped her tail and looked at me in a somewhat disdainful manner, "I don't want to believe that a playboy is the most outstanding member of the Galadriel tribe. My impression of a Galadriel is somebody who can control the entire South, the greatest King among elves, and the fairest King."

"Indeed, I am not the most outstanding member of the Galadriel tribe. Is the one you speak of my mom or my grandpa...?"

"Isn't your mom the Empress? Your father must be the Elven King, right?"

Ling Yue looked at me as if that was a given. She asked, "You're a half-human, half-elf, so you got your human side from the Empress, and the elven part from your father. Is there a problem?"

I laughed. In reality, Ling Yue's reasoning is flawless. Any normal person with a

brain would think that way. Under normal circumstances, they wouldn't be wrong. However, I am an exception... a very special exception.

I looked at Ling Yue and chuckled as I explained, "The current ruler of the elves, Vyvyan Galadriel is a woman, and is also my mom. My mana came from her."

The fur on Ling Yue's tail stood up. She swiftly moved to stroke her tail and comb her fur. She looked at me, feeling somewhat surprised and exclaimed, "Two women... Can two women have children too?! Wh-What else is different between us and you elves and humans?! That's too scary..."

"Of course I wasn't created by two women!! How do I put it... the story between the two of them involves my father, Inard Galadriel. It's a very strange story. If you're not sleepy, I'll tell you the story, but we'll need to be quiet, since..."

I pointed at Tanya, who was curled up next to me, and finished softly. I took my cape off and covered Tanya with it. The camp had fallen silent. Only the guards and patrol team were still awake. My guards haven't had a good rest in a while, but they won't be getting a break anytime soon, unfortunately."

Ling Yue placed her tail on her legs and combed her fur to look nice and neat. She looked at the fire and replied, "Tell me the story if you're not sleepy, then. I've told you my story; tell me yours now, as an exchange."

=====

"Your Highness! Our frontlines are all engaged in battle. It is as we thought. The anthropoids are not harassing us this time as they previously did. This is a pre-mediated war! We beg you, please take to the field. We will help you maintain the rear. You have the purest mana of all. You are the ruler of elves and a demi-god. We hope that you can annihilate as many of our enemies as you can, the same way you did a decade ago!"

Vyvyan looked at the General on his knees down below. She twirled her blonde hair with her finger and looked at the large, exuberant tree overhead. She didn't answer. She just looked on as though she was spacing out.

The General continued to await his Queen's response on his knees. Vyvyan is

the individual with the purest mana. The elves were engaged in a tough battle with the anthropoids in the Eastern forest. She could easily crush them in an instant and reverse the stalemate situation. She could absolutely do it. It would be a simple matter with her mana, but she didn't want to go, because she didn't have an abundance of mana as she before.

She had to try to maintain Zero Time Boundary for her child, while her child absorbed her mana as though it was a bottomless pit. She could control her child's physical growth, but she had to supply mana to her child. Vyvyan felt surprised. When she carried Troy, the flow of mana in her wasn't so evident. Since her child was absorbing so much mana, he must be a descendant with extremely high purity mana. He might even be more powerful than her.

However, the consequence was that she didn't dare to use magic carelessly. If she couldn't supply mana, the boundary would break, thereby revealing the change in her belly. Once exposed, she had no means of explaining it to her son.

She needed somebody to come to her right now, and said person was her son.

Vyvyan can absorb another's mana via sucking their blood. Her son happened to have an abundance of highly pure mana, making him the best candidate for her. Unfortunately, she couldn't have her son come back as it wasn't safe here in the elven lands. She was determined to not put her son in danger.

At the same time, she couldn't leave the Imperial Capital during wartime, for she had a duty to fulfil as the ruler of elves.

"It's not time for me to descend to the battlefield yet. I can't thoughtlessly leave the Imperial Capital. I took to the field back then, because the human soldiers were right at our city. It's nowhere near as dangerous right now, though."

Vyvyan stood up and walked to the door. She said, "If I had to take to the battlefield every time something happened to you, what use do I have for an army? What use do I have for a General? You're not my son. I don't need to personally attend to your affairs. Additionally, if you disappoint me, I will punish you. Now return to the frontlines. I will only personally take to the battlefield when the situation truly becomes dangerous, and I can see the silhouettes of

the anthropoids from here!”

## Ch. 46

“Your Highness?!”

Echte looked at me, feeling dumbfounded... Ah, I shouldn't be calling him Echte, since he's my father-in-law now. He was, once again, in his Imperial Guard uniform. The elven Imperial Capital was under martial law now. You virtually couldn't see a civilian on the streets. All you could see were Imperial Guards and soldiers tasked with defending the city. No anthropoid was sighted in the vicinity of the Imperial Capital, but martial law was raised to the highest level, nevertheless.

I looked at him and asked, “Where's Her Highness?”

“Her Highness is in the conference chamber right now...”

“I'll go see her now, then.”

I began to walk toward the inner section of the palace. Echte lingered for a moment before saying, “I think... mm... Her Highness... would not be too happy to see you...”

“Why?”

I chuckled. How could Vyvyan not be happy to see me? It would be considered uncommon for Vyvyan to not leap at me and kiss me when she sees me.

Echte shrugged his shoulders and replied, “Because we are at war. Her Highness has stated that she was glad that you were not here on more than one occasion. If you are here, I bet you would charge out as you did against the Earth Dragons. Further, according to what Her Highness said, you are more impulsive now than in the past. Her Highness really did not want you to return this time.”

“But this is a war!!”

“She does not want for you to return precisely because we are at war. Your Highness, you have never been on the battlefield, so you do not know how brutal and cruel war is. You should not take to the battlefield even if you are

looking to make a name for yourself, not to mention that we are battling anthropoids this time. The horde of anthropoids seems to have no concept of pain or fear. Fighting them is fighting with your life on the line. There are lots of them, too. I really have no clue where they come from.”

“I’m the next Elven King!” I looked at Ecthe and seriously exclaimed, “The elven nation will be in my hands next. My people are being threatened by the anthropoids right now. I’m not doing this for reputation or something. I just want to fulfil my duty as the Prince. How can I just sit and watch this sort of war?!”

“But your safety is Her Highness’ primary concern. Frankly speaking, Her Highness could end this war if she personally fought back, but it seems that she does not consider this to be very important, and hence, she has not gone to the frontlines, yet... However, I feel that there is something wrong with her mana. Her Highness’ reaction and energy are far inferior to the past. It feels as though... she is the same as Lucia right now.”

“Is she...?”

I frowned. Mom did mention that she seemed to have some issues with her mana. It sounds as though the mana I replenished for her is no longer enough. I don’t know what’s wrong with mom.

*‘Could she be sick? By the sounds of it, I’ll have to replenish Mom’s mana.’*

*‘However, replenishing mana via kissing is frankly too slow. Sucking out blood is a very good method though. The issue is that I’ll be left weak for a long time afterwards.’*

*‘The last method...’*

*‘I can only replenish Lucia’s mana using that method...’*

I’m essentially Mom’s mobile charger. She’s supposed to suck a bunch of my mana each month, but she hasn’t sucked any the last few months.

*‘I don’t think I can use Mom this month, either. I don’t know who else around me I can use.’*

I didn’t care about what Echte said. I went straight to the conference

chamber. Echte sighed when he noticed that I didn't care whatsoever. He said, "In any case, you must be careful, Your Highness. If possible, it is best that you do not leave Her Highness's side."

I pushed the door open and with a smile replied, "I might not bring Her Highness with me this time."

In the centre of the elves' conference chamber is a large tree. The grass and flowers underneath said tree were the same as the grass I saw during the Deer Hunting Festival. Mom had her back to me. I didn't know what she was thinking about as she looked at the tree.

"Son, Mommy doesn't want to see you here right now, as Mommy can tell what you want to do when Mommy sees you. Mommy won't be able to stop you either, right? Actually, Mommy can stop you."

Vyvyan turned around. Her emerald dress was comparable a feather descended from the heavens. Mom's dreary smile that accompanied her long-blond hair made her look very haggard.

"No, Mom, I don't intend to personally go there this time."

I looked at Mom's eyes and emphasised 'Mom'.

Mom lingered. She looked at me and giggled in a soft voice. She replied, "So, what do you want to do, then, Son? Did you want Mommy to go and deal with the anthropoids?"

"I wouldn't say that I want you to go and deal with them."

I looked at Mom and undid the buttons at my chest. I then removed my cape and the scarf Mommy Elizabeth made me. I revealed my neck, "Here, Mom."

"Hmm?"

Vyvyan paused. She tilted her head, "Son, what are you trying to do?"

"Suck my blood; absorb my mana, Mom. Mom, you're having issues with your mana, aren't you? Don't worry, just suck my blood."

Mom smiled and walked up to me slowly then clasped my face. She ran her slender fingers across my cheeks as if she was trying to carve the memory of my face shape into her hands. I looked at Mom. I looked at her smiling eyes. I



looked at Mom's blue eyes that resembled the ocean. I waited for the moment Mom would bite me.

Mom continued stroking my face while looking into my eyes. She gently said, "Son, Mommy isn't most worried about Mommy, but you. Son, if Lucia dies or disappears from now, what will you do?"

"Why..."

I was befuddled, not because of Lucia, but because I didn't have the foggiest idea as to why Mom suddenly brought this up.

*'That has nothing to do with what I want to talk about!'*

"Son, did you not know? Our Galadriel tribe's mana is very pure; therefore, our tribe won't allow a descendant with mana purity that is too low to exist. Lucia has very little mana, and her only reaction during her pregnancy is lethargy. That goes to show that your child's mana will be middle to low grade."

"So... what will that mean...? And... right now, I..."

Vyvyan solemnly replied, "Lucia will be exiled. Not even Mommy will be able to keep her, for the reason that the decision to exile her is an elven tradition. Only he, with the most pure bloodline, will be able to succeed the Elven King's throne. As a Princess, Lucia should give birth to a satisfactory Crown Prince. She has failed to do what a Princess must do. She has disappointed the expectations of all the elves, and as such, will be exiled. Normally, she and her child would be executed together for the sake of the Galadriel Tribe's purity before she is even exiled."

"That..."

I felt my hands and feet go numb.

*'I don't know what Mom's purpose in telling me this now is, but nevertheless, that is definitely not what I want.'*

*'Mom may be the ruler of elves, but she can't control what the elves think. I wouldn't be surprised if they did that if our child wasn't capable of succeeding the throne... However, I don't want for that to happen.'*

"Mommy only has one method to prevent that. There is only one way to save

Lucia.”

Mom leaned into my ear and bit it. She then whispered into my ear her idea.

“MOM!!”

My entire body shuddered. I looked at her, absolutely stunned, lost for words and with no idea how to react. As opposed to saying that Mom suggested something, it would be more accurate to say that she set a bomb off in my head.

“It’s no big deal, Son. This is for Lucia’s sake! Mommy resorted to this for your sake!!” Mom made eye contact with me. Her gaze was stern. She said, “Do you want to save Lucia or not?! Do you want your child or not?! This is Mommy’s only solution. We can’t change what the elves think, so this is the only method left to appease them!”

“But... but... but...”

“Son, is there something you can’t let go of? Mommy should be embarrassed, not you.”

Mom sighed, and then grabbed hold of my hands. She placed them onto her chest and in that split second, the softness and warmth of her breasts transferred to my hands. Mom looked at me and next to my ear, whispered similarly to the devil, “This is for your wife, your child, yourself and Mommy. Mommy warned you before, and now it’s happened... Son, you should know what to do now, right?”

## Ch. 47

Mommy Vyvyan truly makes one addicted and gives them the desire to indulge.

Her body was soft, warm and very familiar. Every inch of it made it so nice to be embraced by her. It was so nice that my mind almost blanked out. My initial resistance and sadness completely vanished once Mom hugged me and kissed me. As a matter of fact, I lost all of my conscious thoughts.

We were comparable to animals in heat. Mom clung to me as if she was an octopus. I have no idea how long we were locked in with each other that night, but we only released each other and fell asleep, because we were spent.

Mom's hand and mine were tightly locked together when I was totally spent. I don't know what I was thinking. In fact, I didn't want to remember what I just did. I thought that I'd feel disgusted and depressed after doing the deed, but I was astounded to discover that I didn't react in any particular way.

It was though I just did it with Nier and as if the one I just embraced with was Lucia. It was as though I was with my wife.

"Now, all is well, Son."

Mom held my hand and gently stroked my face. With a smile, she said, "Just treat it as a dream, Son. Mommy needs your mana. Mommy really needs your mana right now. This child has already absorbed too much of Mommy's mana. If the anthropoids come at this time, Mommy may not have enough mana to cast spells... Mommy would've been able to continue hiding it if the anthropoids didn't come around, but now, Mommy... can't hide it anymore..."

"Wait... what... child...?"

"Nothing. Son, sleep for a bit. Get some good rest. Just consider it a dream. Mommy won't disturb your life or ask you to do anything... Mommy does everything Mommy does for you, because you are Mommy's son. Mommy can do anything for you as long as you can be happy... Mommy loves you... Honest... Mommy... loves you far too much..."

I blankly looked at Mom's hand that was stroking my forehead. Mom's heterochromia eyes that carried a hint of sadness swallowed me into the darkness before I could shout. I had countless questions to ask and countless things to say, but Mom didn't give me the opportunity.

Mom can erase people's memories. I don't know if I'll be able to remember anything once I've woken up...

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From her throne, Vyvyan looked down at Echte kneeling on one knee and softly said, "Make the preparations. I shall go to the frontlines tomorrow."

“That... that...”

Ecthe looked at his queen, feeling dumbfounded. Vyvyan covered one of her eyes and sternly said, “I think that I need to go to the frontlines. The battle on the frontlines has reached a stalemate. We have no need to be entangled with these over-the-hill filthy anthropoids any longer. The lives of our soldiers are a lot more valuable than theirs. I will personally head out tomorrow. I will show them how frightening an elven ruler’s fury is.”

“Is this decision of yours not a bit too reckless...? You see... did you not refuse our General’s request yesterday? For you to suddenly join the frontlines now... is...”

“I already told you. I will go to the frontlines when I judge it to be appropriate, and I believe that I need to go now.”

Vyvyan removed her hand and looked at Echte with one of her blood-red eyes. It was as though she could see through Echte’s entire body. He shivered as if he felt a cold breeze. Any normal person would be frightened after being looked at by eyes filled with a wild nature. Her blood-red eyes were evidently abnormal. They looked as if blood would spill out from them. Or maybe they were eyes that wanted to make others spill blood.

“Then, your health...”

“I’ve always been fine.” Vyvyan flexed her neck then whipped her long blonde hair, “My mana and body are both fine. As a matter of fact, I have more mana than before. My son is here by my side, so naturally, I can’t sit in the rear and watch my son go to war. My son is the Elven Prince. As the Elven Prince, he can’t just sit around in the rear. I will accompany my son. He shall protect this nation. and I shall protect him.”

Echte, while looking at his Queen, lingered for a moment before nodding, “All right, Your Highness. The Imperial Guards shall accompany you at your side.”

“Uhm, also, girl, who’s been standing at the door the entire time, you came here with my son, right?”

Vyvyan’s gaze suddenly shifted to the door. Echte froze up; he looked at Ling Yue standing at the door shaking. He, himself, was surprised. He stood up and in

a tense tone, apologised, “I apologise... I apologise, Your Highness... I... I honestly did not notice her...”

“It’s fine. The girl used magic. Her mana is a fair lot superior to yours. It’s, therefore, normal for you to have not detected her. Nonetheless, since my son brought her here, I am not hostile toward her. I’m just a little curious, since she’s stood there for so long.”

Vyvyan looked at her and stood up. Ling Yue’s ears and tail shook with excitement when she looked back at her. She looked at Vyvyan with her own blood-red eyes. In a shaky voice, she called, “G-G-Galadriel?! Your Highness... The elves... the elves’ most outstanding leader... Galadriel...”

Echte looked at her and thundered, “You have no right to mention Her Highness’s surname!”

Ling Yue ignored him. She looked at Vyvyan with excitement in her eyes as she sobbed. She knelt on the ground and sobbed, “I beg you... I beg you... save us... Please... help us... The North... the North cannot hold on any longer. Without the elven spring... the North will definitely be destroyed... It definitely will be destroyed! I beg you... please help us!”

Vyvyan rose and pushed Echte, who had his sword drawn out, of the way. The elven spring is a taboo topic for elves. Nobody is allowed to covet it. What was on Vyvyan’s mind right now wasn’t that, though. She slowly walked up to Ling Yue, and then lifted her chin up with her fingers. She looked at the blood-red crescent moon shaped eyes Ling Yue had. With a smile, Vyvyan said, “Your eyes... are very beautiful.”

“What...?”

Ling Yue didn’t quite get it. She looked at Vyvyan with confusion.

“I think my son would like your pretty eyes, so don’t do something that will lead to being you unable to open them again.”

Vyvyan turned around. With her back facing Ling Yue, she coldly said, “The Galadriel tribe controls the elves’ spring. Only members of the Galadriel family have the right to discuss where it flows to. Anybody who wants to pollute it must be punished. I shall forgive your rudeness this time, for you are a woman

at my son's side; however..."

Vyvyan appeared behind Ling Yue in what appeared to be an instant. Ling Yue froze in place as if a dagger was on her back. Vyvyan gently grabbed Ling Yue's tail. She giggled softly then continued, "However... you, too, are an anthropoid... Miss... you appeared at my son's side when the anthropoids attacked us, and you want us elves' spring water... You are suspicious from every perspective..."

"I... I..."

"I can see what you're thinking, Miss."

Vyvyan gently placed Ling Yue's tail down.

Ling Yue swiftly coiled her tail underneath her, afraid that it would disappear in the next instant.

"Don't go getting any ideas for my son. Miss, your thoughts are still considered pure, right now. However, if you hold any threatening thoughts for my son, even if just a tinge... I'll, personally, snap your neck no matter where you are or when..."

## Ch. 48

"Your Highness... you..."

I scrubbed my hair as I looked at Echte who was in front of me with a helpless smile. I asked, "What's wrong, Echte? Where is Her Highness? Shouldn't you have woken me up this morning?"

"Her Highness has finished organising the army. She said that you were exhausted, and therefore told us not to wake you. Her Highness is currently waiting for you at the entrance of the Imperial Palace."

I lingered. I never thought that Mommy Vyvyan would've personally headed out with a team so soon. After having her mana replenished, Mom could go and end the stalemate. I could then lead my Earth Dragon Cavalry unit south, to either reinforce the defences of Troy City or directly break the siege.

I felt that there was something important that I couldn't recall. I couldn't remember what happened last night, and I think it was Mommy Vyvyan that said something which is stopping me from remembering. My memory is telling me that what Mom said is very important.

I just couldn't recall what exactly she said.

*'Is it because I was too tired last night, or did Mom delete a part of my memory?'*

*'I don't know.'*

I quickly gave up, since I was bound to never remember it regardless of how hard I tried to recall it. I don't need to remember those sorts of things at the moment, either. I absolutely don't want to recall doing what I did with Mommy Vyvyan. Let's just bury it in my memory forever.

*'It was all for Lucia's sake. I had no choice but to do it for Lucia's sake...'*

I knew the reason for why I did it, but I just couldn't convince myself. My inner mind kept cursing me for being a weakling and calling me scum.

I had no choice, though. I couldn't make an enemy out of all the elves for Lucia. Mommy Vyvyan does, indeed, love me, but she can't betray the entire race just for me. It's the same as what happened with Mommy Elizabeth and Inard. Problems with the imperial family's bloodline and mana purity were unacceptable.

It's an elven tradition that not even Vyvyan could change. The Galadriel tribe was able to hold the throne for so many years without anybody contesting their rule thanks to their mana purity and pure bloodline. It was thanks to Vyvyan's efforts that I was able to enjoy Lucia's love for me as a member of the imperial family. Vyvyan, however, is helpless regarding the matter concerning descendants.

My only option is to raise a child with an extremely pure bloodline and superior mana as my successor, while my child with Lucia was our true child.

I shook my head in an attempt to get rid of these things from my mind.

*'I need to focus on dealing with the anthropoids right now. If I keep thinking*

*about it, I'm going to start having weird thoughts for Mommy Vyvyan again.'*

I walked to another room. The room was Ling Yue's room. Of course, it once was Lucia's room. As we walked over to her room, I asked Echte, who was beside me, "Where is my Earth Dragon Cavalry unit?"

He replied, "Your Earth Dragon Cavalry unit has never been touched. Her Highness said that she had no right to order your team around, so we have always waited for your command."

"All right, then. Get a messenger to inform them that the entire Earth Dragon Cavalry unit is to follow me to battle. Also, what's the situation in the Eastern forest at present?"

"It is all right. Our men held back the anthropoids attack. However, after destroying our forest, they moved the trees that chopped down."

I knocked on the door and frowned at the same time, "Why did they have to chop down trees? Are they going to use it for firewood? Even if that was what they were intending to use it for, they wouldn't need to destroy the entire forest."

"I am not sure myself. Nevertheless, the anthropoids do not always act with rational reasons. Perhaps they just want to destroy the forest."

Ling Yue opened up and looked at me, feeling slightly worried. She hid behind the door and looked behind me. She then quietly asked, "Umm... Umm... Her Highness is not here, is she...?"

I nodded. I couldn't help but smile as I looked at her, "What's wrong? Are you scared of her? Mommy Vyvyan is very nice and friendly..."

"Really...? I really can't see that..."

Ling Yue jolted. She revealed a blatant look of terror. I don't know what Mommy Vyvyan said or did to her... Mommy Vyvyan, truly, is a very kind and friendly woman, the prerequisite being that you don't mention something which is harmful to me in her presence...

I reached my hand out while looking at her, "Let's go, Ling Yue. We now need to take the first step to enacting our agreement now. If you want revenge, you



must take this first step. My territory has been invaded by the anthropoids. We need to drive them away first, and then we'll head north. If you're not afraid, come with me. I promise to do everything in my power to protect you. Alternatively, if you don't want to go, you can just wait here for my good news, too."

Ling Yue looked up at me. Her ears twitched. She said, "Do you consider me a coward? I'm not afraid of those anthropoids! I told you, I want to see the day my goal is achieved. Until then, I'll always follow you around. I'll watch every step you take to make my goal a reality. I've already gone through life and death, so there's nothing I'm afraid of anymore... other than Her Highness' threats..."

Ling Yue grabbed hold of my hand and looked at me resolutely. I held her hand tightly. She lingered for a moment, and then suddenly pulled her hand out with her might. She looked at me with outrage and exclaimed, "Don't hold a lady's hand so tightly! That's very impolite of you! The only person's hand you would hold so tightly is your wife's!"

I chuckled. She didn't react that way when I held her hand when she cried. I've already witnessed her gentle side, yet she still goes out of her way to hide it, and show me her shell that I can tell is falsely tough. If Ling Yue could be a bit more upfront with herself, she'd be very cute.

However, she wouldn't be herself anymore without that tough shell.

She left the palace with me. All of the Imperial Guards in the palace had virtually vanished. I presumed that they were accompanying Her Highness to battle. They're a unit that exists to protect her, after all. They only serve their purpose by accompanying her. There would be no meaning to guarding a palace without her.

I don't think they left thinking that they were doomed to die, though, for it was the Elven Queen who was going to battle this time. She's the elf with the purest magic in the history of elves, a demi-god who knew how to wield her powers splendidly. Right now, she was now in her most exuberant period that they had not yet witnessed before.

It's going to be a one-sided slaughter.

I stood under the sunlight. In front of me was Vyvyan, who was on horseback. Mom's eyes were as clear as the blue sky overhead. Her smile was warmer than the beautiful sun. Her soldiers, who were behind her, awaited her command. She looked at me and smiled. She extended one finger out to point at a horse next to her, "Son, you ride this horse. Don't leave Mommy's side. You all won't need to do anything this time, but you must witness how the ruler of elves slaughters these ignorant invaders."

Mom turned around to face her soldiers. In a loud voice, she declared, "The Galadriels have defended this place for millenniums. My ancestors, my grandpa, my father and my brother all spilt blood for this continent! It's my turn this time! But that's not all. I will bring my only child, the only descendant of the Galadriel Tribe along this time. Our tribe is the ruler of elves. You crowned us your sovereign, so we will protect you. It is time for I, Vyvyan Galadriel to fulfil my promise! Soldiers, charge to the East and charge toward the enemy. Follow behind me. March! Slay those repulsive wild beasts!!"

## Ch. 49

I once destroyed a lake and an entire forest.

I witnessed how terrifying magic was that time. Magic is an imagination process for elves. As long as they can command the elements around them, they'll be able to get everything around to heed their call. Magic is a lot more convenient than humanity's machines – to a certain extent. At least that holds true for when it comes to killing.

The entire sky was now red as a flame. It was as though the entire sky was on ablaze. The blue sky had been replaced with a fiery savage smile. The entire world appeared as if it was being burnt by the hellfire. Though the sky was ablaze, the floor was frozen ice. The anthropoids were frozen in the ground. They howled with all of their might, but they were relegated to only being able to look at the flame in the sky and the dominant silhouette similar to that of an angel soaring in the sky.

Vyvyan took in a deep breath. Her blood-red eyes were more dangerous than the flames. She coldly looked at the bodies below as if the anthropoids were fish frozen in a river. She looked at the large black dot and opened her mouth to speak. However, the sound was akin to thunderclap.

“You came from the snow and ice, so let’s make the snow and ice your tomb! This is a gift from us elves. Remember it well, you horde of revolting trash! This land is the forest you destroyed, so let us use your corpses to nourish this land you destroyed!”

Vyvyan waved her hand aggressively, bringing down a gigantic, blazing boulder from the sky and smashing it into the ground. The entire continent quaked as though it was going to be split due to the boulder. Initially, I didn’t quite believe that the north and south of the continent were separated due to the power of magic, but I’m a believer now. I completely understood it now that I was standing here on this quaking continent, watching the flame that resembled a rampaging dragon.

In the face of ultimate mana, recreating a world wouldn’t even be an issue.

The demi-god, Vyvyan, could probably destroy the Earth and heavens.

The painful cries of the anthropoids echoed as if bombs went off in the air. Despite the flames burning horizontally, the ice below still didn’t melt, thereby leaving the anthropoids with no means of escape. After the boulder dropped, a ridiculously strong gust of wind blew, bringing the flames along, creating a fire tornado as a result. From the sky, Mom waved her hand to direct the fire tornado to rampage on the horde of anthropoids.

It was a simple massacre.

There was no pressure for the teams luring the anthropoids out, for the anthropoids would leave their nests and give chase as soon as they saw retreating elves. The elves would then lead them to a vacant area, where Mom would then instantly freeze all of the anthropoids before beginning a killing spree.

Not a single anthropoid got off.

There were no survivors and no corpses that were intact. As a matter a fact,

nothing but charcoal remained. Mom didn't threaten them or show off. She simply demonstrated a reality. The Galadriels could tear the continent apart.

*'You think we can't wipe you anthropoids out if given the opportunity?'*

The flames and ice vanished as though they never existed. Mommy Vyvyan landed gracefully in front of me, but then powerlessly leaned onto my chest. She cupped my face lightly with her hands and gently panted. Her body temperature rose. I didn't know what was going on.

They were the after-effects Vyvyan suffers after expending mana. As a result, her dark elf instincts kicked in.

I supported Vyvyan.

*'It's best not to let the soldiers to the rear see her eyes right now.'*

I waved my hand and shouted, "Now, soldiers, clean up the battlefield. Use these burnt corpses to nourish our land to rebuild our forest. They destroyed our forest; let's make them compensate us with their lives. Lock their souls here so that they can never return."

"Roger!"

The elven soldiers, who were behind us, rushed forward. There was only scorched land left there. Owing to the high temperature, the floor had cracked. A tornado of dark dust blew as if it was carrying up the cries into the distance. I don't think the elven soldiers knew what to do, either. This land can't be revived without Mommy Vyvyan repairing it using her mana.

I hugged Mommy Vyvyan and checked to see that there was nobody around. She leaned her head on my shoulder, and then bit deep my neck. A strange ecstatic and sucking sensation came from my neck. Mom was absorbing my mana.

*'It appears that Vyvyan tires out on nights where it isn't a full moon after using several large-scale spells in succession despite having that night with me.'*

If I wasn't here, she would be stuck in this state for a period of time. Vyvyan still had her rationality intact. All we had to do was avoid letting anyone else see her current state. However, since the soldiers were present, she had to

immediately replenish some of her mana to return to her usual state so that she could avoid exposing her blood-red eyes.

The blood-red eyes are a trait of dark elves.

“All right now, Son.”

Vyvyan raised her head up from my neck. She ran her hand over the teeth mark on my neck then looked into my eyes, “There shouldn’t be anything left to worry about here in the elven lands. After this, the anthropoids shouldn’t have what they require to launch attacks again. Next is clearing the anthropoids out of the forest. You can return to Troy City now.”

“No... I can’t help but feel that something is wrong.”

I looked at the scorched Earth and frowned. I explained, “If there are only this many anthropoids, how come the elves on the frontline were locked in a tough battle? I think that this is only a part of the anthropoids. We should’ve lured the anthropoids out from their camp. They don’t have any ambushes, either...”

“You’re saying that there are other anthropoids remaining? Mommy can tell you with absolute certainty that Mommy cannot sense any other anthropoids other than a few minor ones in the forest. These are the only anthropoids in the eastern forest, as well as this group of white deer, who have no homes now, since this horde of anthropoids destroyed the forest. As for why we were stuck in a stalemate, that’s because the general was useless. I’m going to punish him once we get back!”

I hesitated for a moment then replied, “Why...? There are only so many anthropoids, and they’re all brain-dead. I’m certain that the fault doesn’t lie with the general. I think that there’s another reason... Also... the anthropoids chopped down so many trees, yet their camp was shabby. There’s also the fact that it was constructed with stone. So what happened to the wood? Where did all the wood go?”

“That... Maybe they used it to make something...”

Mom silently deliberated the question for a moment. Mom and my expression then changed completely at virtually the same moment.

“Mom, can you sense Troy City from here?!”

“Troy City? That’s too far away.”

Mom shook her head, “Hurry back then, son. Return to Troy City immediately. Bring your men along. If there are few anthropoids here and they chopped down lots of trees, they’re definitely planning to attack the city. It’s very safe here, which means that the place that’s at most risk is your Troy City, then!”

“Yes! I know! I need to rush back now. Mom, I need to head back now.”

Vyvyan nodded, “Before you leave, you can go and search for the White Deer King. I think that the White Deer King would be furious that its home was destroyed. I believe that you can reach an agreement with it now. Mommy won’t be worried about your safety with the speed of the White Deer King on your side.”

“Uhm, got it.”

## Ch. 50

The anthropoids weren’t in the elven lands. Perhaps they never intended to attack the elves here. Or maybe they felt it was unwise to attack the elves right now. Whatever the case may be, the anthropoids only stopped there for a short while.

I underestimated the anthropoids’ ability to think. Ling Yue said that the anthropoids are virtually brainless, only killing and destroying. Therefore, I didn’t consider the purpose behind each step they took. I was under the impression that the things they did served no purpose. I never expected the anthropoids to act with a plan in mind.

They weren’t after the elven lands here; at least, not now. My guess is that was because they knew that it’d be impossible for the lead team to conquer the elven lands. If the anthropoids over on their side are afraid of the Galadriels, they will be very cautious against the elves.

What the anthropoids want right now is Troy City.

They only wanted the resources from here, the elven lands.

They failed in their attack on Socina City, because they didn't have appropriate weapons for capturing a city. This time, however, they chopped down a large number of trees in the Eastern forest. They'd have spare wood after building siege towers, let alone ladders. If I made it back one day earlier or Mom headed out one day earlier, maybe we could've stopped them returning South to attack us with a large force. Alas, it's too late now.

The anthropoids should be rushing toward Troy City now. Troy City is the city that sits on the border of the elven and human border. If they manage to conquer it, they'll be able to threaten both elves and humans. The anthropoids from Socina will be able to gather at Troy City and even turn it into a weapon and tool factory on the frontlines. The anthropoids on the frontlines charging at us may be brainless, but their commander in the rear is a highly-advanced anthropoid as Ling Yue is.

I underestimated them.

I can still make it in time. However, I need to find an old friend, or maybe an ill fate. I'm referring to the White Deer King.

The White Deer King ran off last time, refusing to become my steed. I really wanted to make it my steed this time, though. The White Deer King is extremely fast, while I happen to want to return to Troy City immediately. Moreover, the White Deer King might be able to rescue me from danger with its speed in the future. As a plus, it can neutralise all sorts of venoms. The White Deer King is an invaluable treasure to me.

*'It ran away last time. I wonder if it'll accept me this time.'*

I looked at the White Deer King. It was the same as before. It looked at me arrogantly and majestically the same way as it did back then. Next to it was a group of white deer, which I presumed to be its tribesmen. I looked at them. They scanned me with curiosity. I never saw so many white deer during the Deer Hunting Festival.

I did nearly get beaten to death by a rabbit, nevertheless.

"Mm... I don't know if you can understand me..."

I looked at the White Deer King and started awkwardly. Speaking to a deer

looks stupid no matter how you look at it. In saying that, I trust that it can understand me. The White Deer King looked at me and blew a gust of hot air out from its nose. Maybe that was its response to me. I swallowed my saliva. I looked at it and continued, “White Deer King, it’s been a long time. This time, I came for our common enemy. That’s right. I’m talking about that horde of anthropoids. They invaded our territory and even destroyed this holy forest. You and your tribesmen must’ve gone through a crisis.”

The White Deer King didn’t make a very arrogant gesture this time. It was the first time that it took me serious as it looked at me. It stamped its hooves, leaving deeply-etched prints in the grass.

*‘It must be furious, as well.’*

It watched its home get destroyed and its tribesmen get killed. However, it was powerless despite being their King. It could only run away with its tribesmen. Its tribesmen may consider it good fortune to have escaped with their lives, but as a King and lord of a territory, it was suffering due to its weakness and powerlessness.

We both felt the same way in that regard.

*‘I can’t flee. I must protect my people and my territory. As a King, I carry more responsibilities than the average person. If I can’t fulfil my duties, I’ll feel guilty and humiliated, which feels worse than death. Death isn’t that scary. What’s truly scary is living in anguish.’*

A moment of carelessness won’t bring a lifetime of happiness. Life itself is a consumable. A life that’s consumed for a goal is a life that was meaningful. Misusing life is a waste of life. A glorious life isn’t measured by how long it is, but whether that moment of explosion can take the people’s breath away just as fireworks.

*‘Since when did I start considering myself a King?’*

I looked at it and sincerely explained, “So, I came this time to come to an agreement with you. I’m the next Elven King. I’m leading the war against the anthropoids this time. They are our common enemy. I think that you want to join the war against the anthropoids, too. I’ll provide you with the right to join this war, but you’ll need to provide me with your value as a White Deer King. In



other words, I'll protect your tribesmen, help you get back at them, and take back your territory. You need to be my steed.

I had a chance to make you my steed last time. But nonetheless, I know that you, too, are a King. I can't make such a suggestion to a King, but things are different this time. We are coming to an agreement. If you think it's feasible, lower your head. I promise that I will drive the horde of anthropoids back to the North and return peace to this forest. No elf will disturb your life thereafter, as well. What do you think?"

It looked at me and stamped its foot on the ground. Perhaps it could understand what I meant, but I had no idea what it was expressing. All I could do was meet its gaze.

I wasn't lying. I don't want to resort to underhanded schemes to turn it into my steed. If that's what I wanted to do, I could've done it months ago. The White Deer King is also a King; I can't order a King. We're on equal footing, so if I can ride it, then it's an agreement we came to.

It seemed to be a bit hesitant. It looked back at its tribesmen. I don't know what they said or what their gazes meant, but I didn't interrupt them.

A moment after, it turned back around and walked up to me. It looked up and met my eyes in a serious manner as though it wanted to confirm once again.

"I promise. I swear on the Galadriel name of the imperial family that I will not violate our agreement or betray you. I'll let you witness the anthropoids fleeing. I'll let you go to the North as a victor, and I will guarantee the safety of your tribesmen in the future.

I looked at it. I didn't know if I should've reached my hand out or not. I asked, "So, what do you think?"

It walked a circle around me, and then made a sound akin to a deer's laugh. It then walked up to me from the front, looked at me and lowered its head, placing its horn before my chest.

"So... you agree...?"

I looked at its horn, feeling somewhat scared. Seriously, the horn could kill somebody. It stabbed me last time, but it was for the sake of saving me...

It called out then raised its head. It turned back to face its tribesman and bleated. Its tribesman responded with their own bleats. The entire forest was filled with the bleats of deer. They then lied down on the ground and looked at us with extremely envious gazes.

“Let’s... Let’s go, then... I hope my horse saddle fits you... Also... also, should I give you a name? What shall I call you? Xiao Bai?!! Don’t! Don’t! Don’t! Don’t bite me! Don’t bite me! I won’t name you, okay?! Don’t bite me!!”

## **Glossary**

\*Xiao Bai = Small/young/little white. When using “Xiao” as part of a name, it’s either to make it cute or for children – except for the rare exceptions. Here, the “Xiao” is not translated, as it’s used as a name, not as a reference to being small/young. Some people feel offended when you attach it to their name, so there’s how you can try to insult someone in Chinese.